"THERE WERE DEATH THREATS. THERE WERE MELTDOWNS"

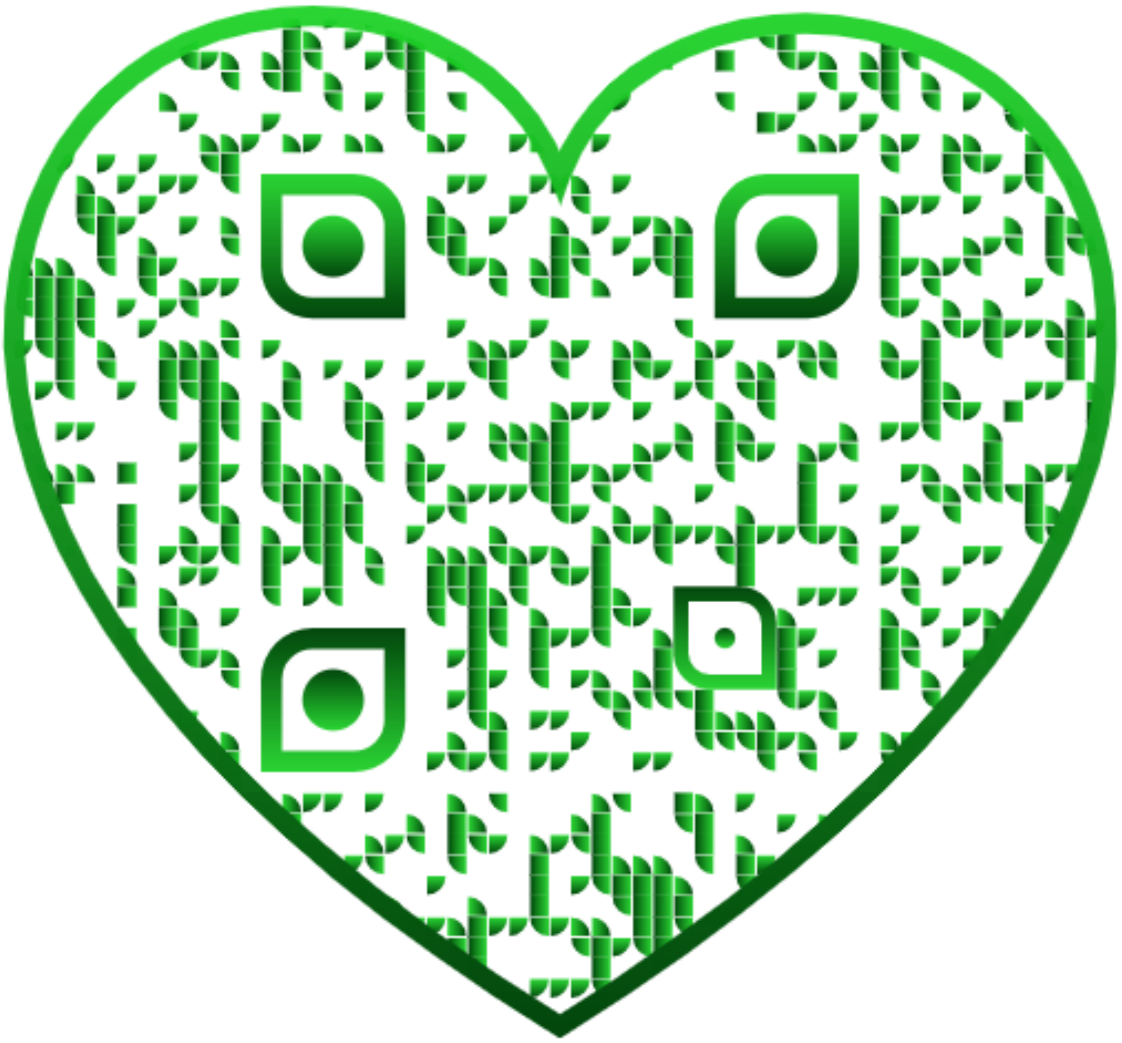
METAL HAMMER

IT'S BEEN 13 YEARS.
WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS...

TOOL

THE DEFINITIVE INTERVIEW

FUTURE
ISSUE 326



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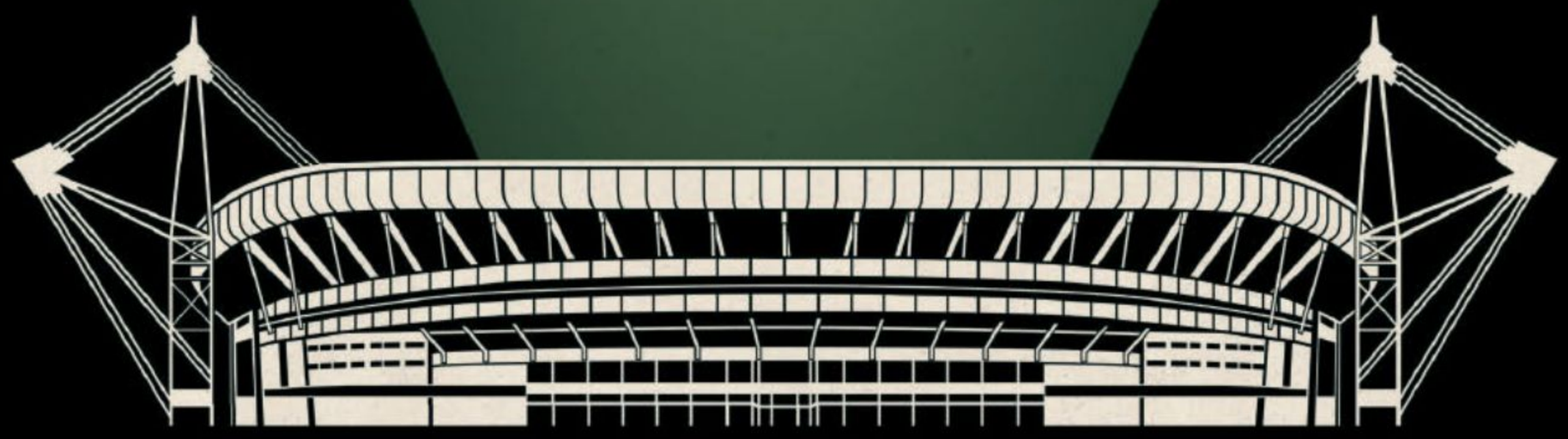

14.06.2020 CARDIFF · PRINCIPALITY STADIUM

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Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 344 848 2852**
Online orders & enquiries **www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk**
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Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9060

ISSN 0955-1190

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I'VE NEVER GOT MY HEAD AROUND TOOL

GROWING UP AS a nu metal kid, they were a band whose methodical, expansive, experimental noise felt like it belonged on a whole other plane of existence to the no-nonsense, bouncy anthems I was immersing myself in in the early 00s. When I finally came round to them, it opened my eyes (and ears) to a brave new world.

Even then, though, I felt like I could never really get to grips with the four people that make up this most enigmatic of metal bands. There's a reason their first album in 13 years feels like a world-shaking event; you never know exactly what to expect from Tool – the band or the people – and when we were granted an exclusive audience with them for this blockbuster cover feature, we had no idea what we were in for.

After reading Eleanor's excellent cover feature on page 38, I feel a little closer to understanding exactly what Tool are all about. I'm not all the way there yet, though. In fact, I'm not convinced anyone on this planet outside of those four musicians ever will be. It's part of the reason we'll always be in awe of them.

HORNS UP

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MEET THE BAND

ELEANOR GOODMAN
DEPUTY EDITOR
This month El got to tick off a bucketlister by writing a Tool cover feature. "After seeing their epic show in Berlin and at Download, it was exciting to finally ask them everything we wanted to know," she says. She sure as hell didn't waste the opportunity!

JUSTIN BORUCKI
PHOTOGRAPHER
Hammer's own Jon Bon Jovi (well, he's from New Jersey) hopped in a car and drove 160 miles north to Woodstock, New York this month, where he got to catch a rare sighting of a metalcore frontman in its natural habitat. Check out the results on page 48.

ALEX DELLER
WRITER
When he's not pitching us tons of killer new bands to stuff in our ears – exhibit A: his New Noise piece on Spotlights – Alex is pitching us features with heroes like Jacob Bannon, whom he interviewed for a fascinating Life Lessons this very issue. Top pitching, bud.

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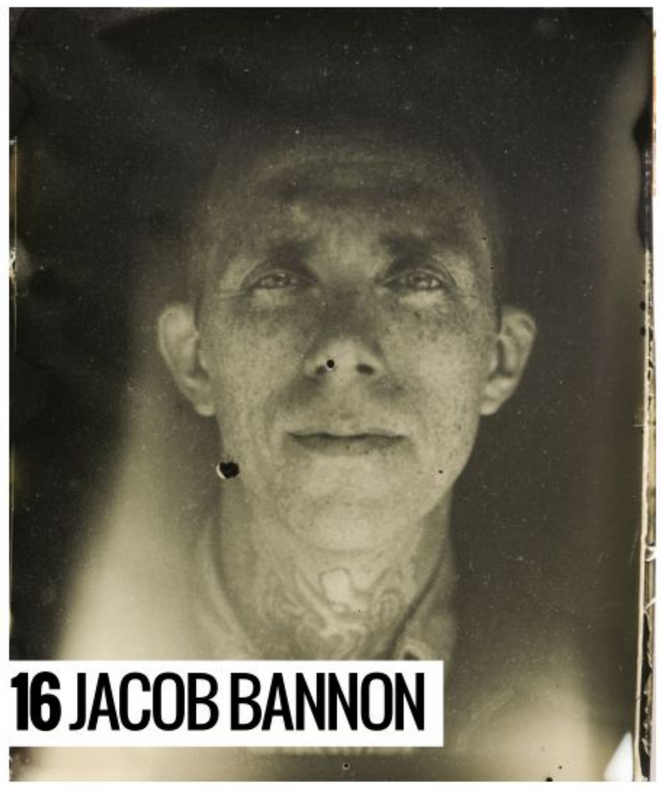
38 TOOL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10 You guys grilled **LZZY HALE** and she did not hold back when it came to weird fan stories.

14 Musicals and metal collide in **TARJA TURUNEN**'s Slaylist.

16 Converge's **JACOB BANNON** gives life advice on hustling and art.

20 We hit the studio with **ALCEST**, who are embracing their blackened side again. Yas!

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30 Meet the intense **LINGUA IGNOTA**.

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Head to p.36 for details

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THE BIG PICTURE

METAL AT WAR

METAL'S GLOBAL IMPACT and importance has rarely been better underlined than when Jake Shuker, frontman of Syrian death metallers Maysaloon, was invited to perform a special set at London's Imperial War Museum last month. The set was put on as a part of the IWM's Rebel Sounds exhibition, designed to highlight musicians across the decades who have faced persecution for their art.

"Back in Syria, we used to perform with fighter jets conducting airstrikes above our heads. Playing the same music at the museum, beneath all the military aircraft on display, made me feel like I was still living the war, but in a different place and with different people. It felt very real," says Jake of the experience. For more info on the Rebel Sounds exhibition, head to www.iwm.org.uk

PRESS/© IWM JAKE SHUKER PERFORMING AT REBEL SOUNDS LIVE, PART OF THE CULTURE UNDER ATTACK SEASON AT IWM LONDON.

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YAMAHA

THE HOT TOPIC

DUNGEON MASTERS

As the new Lacuna Coil album approaches, we've teamed up with The London Dungeon to celebrate it in spectacularly spooky style

WORDS: ALI COOPER

Are you ready to get spooked with Cristina and co?

IN CELEBRATION OF their mysterious ninth album, *Black Anima*, Italian goth metallers Lacuna Coil are bringing their newest studio venture to the spookiest venue they could find: the London Dungeon. For one night only, supported by *Metal Hammer*, a few lucky fans will join the band to experience the dungeons first-hand and hear the record in the creepiest atmosphere possible.

The songs that have become *Black Anima* did not come easily to the mischievous Milanese, who have been working on the album ever since the dust settled on 2016's *Delirium*, vocalist Andrea Ferro tells *Hammer*.

"We started seriously writing about six months ago, but we were struggling with inspiration before that. We tried to sit down and write but it's not something you can force: you either have inspiration or you don't. We don't specifically write concept albums but we always have a theme behind the album, a unique vibe, and I've been reading a lot of books for inspiration."

As cinematic as it is relatable, this new release is more than just a collection of songs to the band. While it may not follow a clear concept like *Delirium*'s broad theme of mental health and institutions, *Black Anima* encompasses the lives and times of the bandmembers over the three years between the two records.

"For us, and [especially] our primary songwriter Marco [Coti Zelati, bass], each album is visualised like a new film, a story made up of different elements drawn from our life experiences from one album to another," Andrea explains. "We collect those feelings and visualise them in a way that's interesting for everybody, not just for us, because we live with these songs for the rest of our lives. It's important that people can relate to our songs even if they haven't experienced the same things."

Teasing the contents of their upcoming album, the first to fully feature new guitarist Diego Cavallotti, Andrea details that his chosen highlight from *Black Anima* is a song that fans will be hearing very soon as one of the earliest tracks to be released from their ninth record.

"*Black Anima* is like a film you'll want to see again, a great cult movie that can be a part of your life, one you're not going to forget. The song *Layers Of Time* stands out to me because I've been listening to it the most. There are a lot of catchy elements to it, but it's also very heavy, it's powerful and very melodic at the same time. It's a good way to surprise people while giving a hint of the flavour of the album – this is not a poppy record!"

"THIS IS NOT A POPPY RECORD!"

THE ALBUM AND its supporting London Dungeon experience have been put together to show the band's gratitude to the fans who've supported the band over their 25 years, providing an intense visual phenomenon to continue their relationship with followers both new and established.

"Very often, people get tattoos of our album artwork and lyrics, so there's a special connection between us and our fans that creates our legacy," Andrea notes. "We appreciate our legacy, and the work we put into each album is repaid by the legacy more than the money made from shirts and records sales."

Lacuna Coil will be kicking off their next era with the London Dungeon event in September, bringing with them their new album for fans to experience in the creepy venue. For the band, London is a significant host city for such an ambitious, experimental event.

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"We've always had a special relationship with the city of London and the UK in general," Andrea says. "London's always been a home gig away from home, somewhere we feel at home because we've been there so many times. We feel so welcome in London and have a lot of friends and personal connections there, so it's important to us to come back and do special events."

Stashing the secrets of the London Dungeon event neatly under their distinctive black uniforms, Lacuna Coil bring this intimate album listening experience to the capital in addition to their UK headline dates, which kick off in November.

"Obviously, we can't tell you too much right now because we want it to be a surprise – plus we're still working on the visuals and developing the artwork for the album, which we'll use in a special setting for this event. We're creating a visual concept totally fitting the *Black Anima* atmosphere, a full-on package of something very artistic like the album, even down to the choice of songs that are more catchy but make more sense for this record. We even have an intro and an outro this time. It's going to be something unique!"

As well as the album playback, the band will join fans to journey through the dungeons and face all the hidden scares and disgusting sights together, and for those that didn't get tickets, you'll be able to follow all the fun via *Metal Hammer*. We couldn't resist asking Andrea the most important question of all, though: Which member of Lacuna Coil will scream first?

"Marco and I grew up together watching the classic 80s horror movie franchises when we were kids, like *Halloween* and *Friday The 13th*, so we are not that easy to scare. Our guitar player, Diego, is a more sensitive and sensible kind of guy so he will be the first one to scream… It definitely won't be Cristina!"

METAL HAMMER PRESENTS LACUNA COIL AT THE LONDON DUNGEON IS ON SEPTEMBER 6. THEIR NEW ALBUM, _BLACK ANIMA_, LANDS ON OCTOBER 11 VIA CENTURY MEDIA. THE BAND TOUR THE UK IN NOVEMBER – SEE P.109 FOR DATES

PRESS/MATT WRYCRAFT@EMPTY SPIRAL

10 THINGS WE LEARNED THIS MONTH

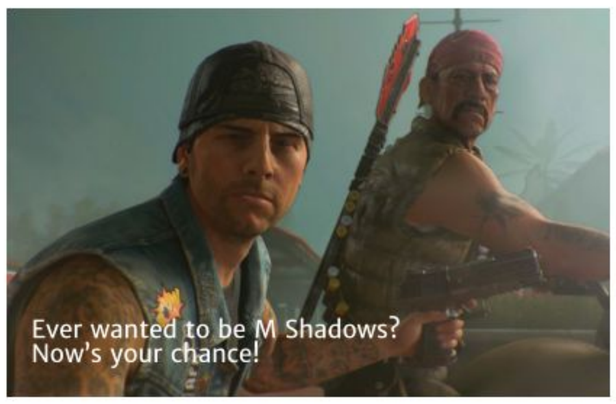
What's been blowing our tiny brains

YOU CAN PLAY WITH M SHADOWS
Steady on, we're talking about him being a playable character in *Call Of Duty: Black Ops 4 – Operation Apocalypse Z*. Obviously.

JUSTIN BIEBER LOVES TOOL
And everyone has been losing their minds about it. Wonder if he picked this issue up? Almost certainly not.

BLOODSTOCK FESTIVAL WAS ABSOLUTELY IMMENSE
You can read our full and mighty review next month!

SLAYER HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR FINAL FINAL DATES
Pass the tissues. What are we gonna do without Slayer?!



Ever wanted to be M Shadows? Now's your chance!

DEVIN IS BACK ON HIS SYL HYPE
Sir Townsend says he'll play Strapping Young Lad material again! Woo!

WE SHOULD GET A NEW 5FDP ALBUM IN 2020
Can't we have one now, though? Come on, lads, pull your fingers out.

CHRIS ADLER HAS LEFT LAMB OF GOD
Booooo! But his replacement, Art Cruz, has been doing a swell job in the meantime. Wheeeey!

METALLICA ARE DOING JIGSAWS NOW
This just isn't thrash metal, is it? Except we really, really want one, so maybe it is. When do we get Cannibal Corpse Jenga?

MAIDEN'S US SETLIST IS JUST AS EPIC AS THE EUROPE ONE WAS
Anyone fancy a road trip? Maybe we should look into that…

SUMMER'S NEARLY OVER ALREADY
What we're gonna miss: all the festivals. What we won't miss: melting.

Devin's going to play SYL stuff again! Yes! Somehow we doubt the skullet will be returning, though

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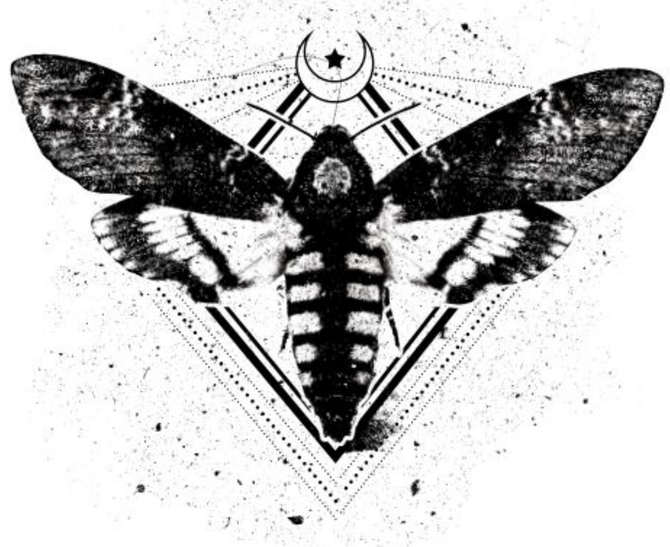


WHO WOULD BE AT YOUR DREAM DINNER PARTY?

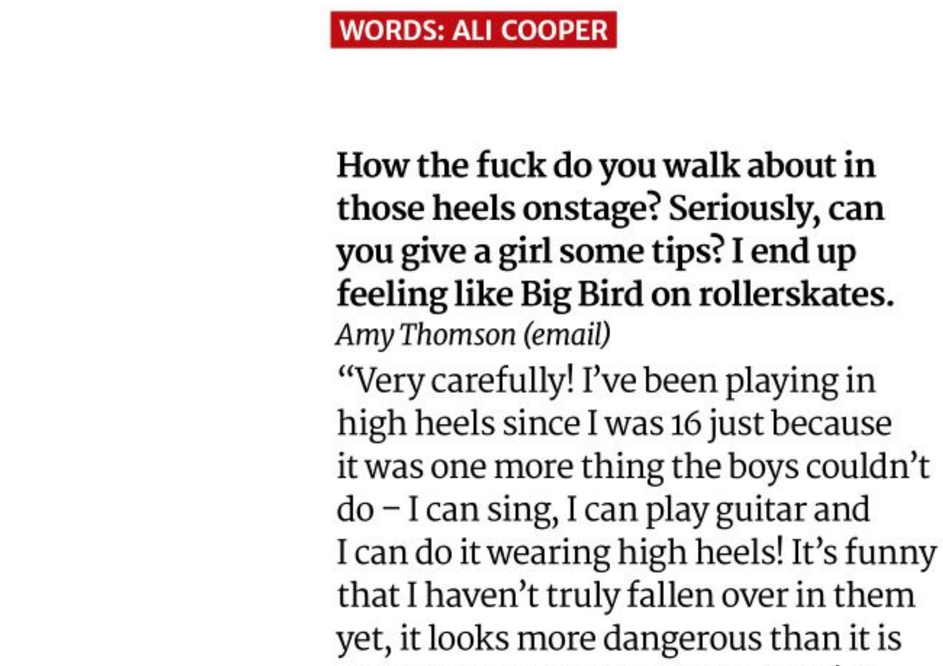
…and a whole shitload of other questions you guys chucked at Halestorm frontwoman and all-round badass, Lzzy Hale

WORDS: ALI COOPER

AFTER RELENTLESSLY TOURING the European festival circuit this summer, rock juggernauts Halestorm return to the UK this winter for their sensational tour with In This Moment and New Years Day to celebrate last year's album, *Vicious*. We asked you lot to quiz Lzzy Hale, the fierce frontlady herself, and she took your grilling like a boss.

Were you more than satisfied with your Download Festival set? Your voice sounded incredible!
@ThePaulieC (Twitter)
"Thank you, I thought we did really good. It's funny walking out onto that stage after playing Download for almost a decade, being able to headline the second stage. I remember saying to my little brother, Arejay, just before we walked out, 'This whole thing of starting a band wasn't a stupid idea, look at all these people here!' That show was such a great high when you lose your mind a little bit because you get lost in the show, I think that's what we're always chasing when we're doing live shows. The beauty of Download is nobody cares about the weather but if it hadn't rained and the weather wasn't crappy, it wouldn't be the same festival!"

How the fuck do you walk about in those heels onstage? Seriously, can you give a girl some tips? I end up feeling like Big Bird on rollerskates.
Amy Thomson (email)
"Very carefully! I've been playing in high heels since I was 16 just because it was one more thing the boys couldn't do – I can sing, I can play guitar and I can do it wearing high heels! It's funny that I haven't truly fallen over in them yet, it looks more dangerous than it is because heels are like stilts, they're an extension of yourself. The only time I truly fell onstage was when I was wearing Converse Chuck Taylors.


Sure you didn't stack it in those heels, Lzzy?!

I don't know how to explain that but that's just my lot in life. I end up buying shoes with a little bit of a platform at the front, it's very uncomfortable if your toes are on the ground and your heels are way up high. I don't know if you're comfortable with buying them but my advice is stripper heels are the absolute best because they're made to be danced around in!"

What song was the most fun to record on *Vicious*?
Jack Hawkins (Facebook)
"I have to say *Uncomfortable* – it was the first song we truly got excited about on the record. Also, we added a lot of weird things to it, like an instrument called an astral whip that literally looks like a vacuum cleaner hose. The harder you whip it, it makes a higher sound. That's part of the beauty of being in the studio: anything goes. We ended up having a lot of fun with that one and there was a lot of laughing to the point of tears!"

How do you define beauty, or what is beautiful to you?
@RAMMF1898 (Twitter)
"Now I'm 35 and I've been narrowing it down since I was a teenager, I consider beauty to be when someone is ▶

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“MY ADVICE? BUY STRIPPER HEELS”

Get this woman a tour with The Darkness immediately!

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unafraid to be unapologetically, truly themselves. I once met this beautiful woman who was always teased for being six foot tall and having a big nose. Instead of hiding it or making herself more acceptable to those people, she would always wear platforms and buy really big glasses to accentuate her nose. To me, that's the most beautiful thing."

Who is there left in the rock and metal world that you'd love to meet or work with and why?
Becca Dayley (email)
"In a classic rock sense, I'd love to do something with Heart. In the modern rock and metal sense, The Darkness are my pick just because I think they're ridiculous. We've never toured with them but we know each other, we talk online all the time so I think that's a good open door. Also, every time I think about working with The Darkness, I smile and laugh because it'd be hilarious. The last time I saw them in concert, Justin Hawkins did a headstand on the drum riser and made everyone clap with his legs going back and forth – it was the most amazing stage move I've ever seen in my life and from that moment on, I've thought to myself that we really need to tour with them. I will find a holographic catsuit if that's what I have to do!"

If you had a time machine, where in the past or future would you go, and why?
Nick Galnor (email)
"Any time in the 1970s. Regardless of what was going on politically, I think the music was amazing and I would just be going to shows non-stop. I'd say late 70s to early 80s, maybe 1979 just in time to catch a lot of people in their heyday. It's 2019, guys, let's get these time machines up and running by now!"

On behalf of our kid, Dan (age 15), he asks: who's your favourite band and why?
Carl Rogers (Facebook)
"Hello Dan! It's hard to pick one because I'm the sum of all the things I listen to but if I had to pick one, it has to be Black Sabbath. No matter what era, it's always epic. Tony Iommi as a guitar player is the total master, he could be drinking tea while writing an amazing riff. How can I even compete, this guy doesn't even have all of his fingertips!"

"A FAN SENT ME A TAMPON"

Lzzy, no doubt pondering why no one has invented time machines yet... or ass-proof Sharpies

Any chance of doing any album-in-full shows? I know the anniversary to the self-titled was this year but doing it in full with some of the rarer tracks would be fire!
Dan Jeffery (Facebook)
"I'd love to do that. The only reason we haven't this year is because of how this particular year rolled out – there were more festival dates than there were headlining shows. We've talked about going out on more Evening With shows just so we can play the entirety of records and throw in everything we want because we have the entire night to ourselves. You can definitely look forward to that in the future, we've been talking about it seriously for a few months now."

What's the most cringey thing a man has ever asked you at a show?
@F_C_R_ (Twitter)
"I'm immune to a lot of it now but a couple of months ago, a guy wanted me to sign his bare ass. I initially said, 'Really? It's gonna ruin my Sharpie!' But he looked at it like it was a sort of rite of passage that would complete his life, so I ended up doing it and he didn't drop his pants totally down, he just showed me a cheek. It did in fact ruin my Sharpie though, because it was a little sweaty there. Another time, a fan gave me a letter and an envelope with a tampon inside. They asked if I could use that tampon next time that time comes for me, then tweet them so they could feel closer to me. That was a little cringey but somebody went to the effort to think about it. There's no amount of education that could've prepared me for that!"

Who would you have at your dream dinner party and why? You can pick five guests.
James Stoodley (email)
"Since we're talking about Justin Hawkins, we can include him, plus definitely the late, great Ronnie James Dio. We'll throw Janis Joplin in, then M Shadows because he's a sweetheart and he knows all the best sushi places so we'd be looking towards him. I'll also have my little brother Arejay because he's a good party starter. He's my brother and my drummer but I'm still including him in things!"

HALESTORM HIT THE UK WITH IN THIS MOMENT AND NEW YEARS DAY LATER THIS YEAR – SEE P.109 FOR DATES. *VICIOUS* IS OUT NOW VIA ATLANTIC

PRESS.

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WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN

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THU 14	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY	SUN 24	CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
SAT 16	MANCHESTER ACADEMY	MON 25	BRISTOL O_2 ACADEMY
SUN 17	NEWCASTLE O_2 ACADEMY	TUE 26	LONDON O_2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN
MON 18	ABERDEEN BEACH BALLROOM	THU 28	SHEFFIELD O_2 ACADEMY
WED 20	INVERNESS IRONWORKS	FRI 29	SOUTHAMPTON O_2 GUILDHALL
THU 21	GLASGOW BARROWLAND	SAT 30	OXFORD O_2 ACADEMY

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THE SLAYLIST

TARJA TURUNEN

She loves her opera and metal in equal measure. She should try combining them sometime…

WORDS: ALI COOPER

LISTEN NOW
Head to www.tinyurl.com/TarjaSlaylist to listen to Tarja's Slaylist

"WHITNEY HOUSTON WAS my idol when I was a young girl. My singing teacher would make me sing soul songs from the age of 12, and the power in Whitney's voice was incredible. I tried singing *Greatest Love Of All* at school concerts but the high notes were a struggle and I got a sore throat, but that song led me to find a vocal teacher. My parents started taking me to see plays at the theatre and I loved musicals like **ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER**'s *Phantom Of The Opera*. Sarah Brightman was one of the most influential singers of my youth and I always wondered how a soprano could sing those high notes and how I'd love to be able to sing them one day… a few years later, I could! I always thought I'd become an opera singer, but I suddenly accepted the challenge of metal music which opened a new world for me. **PETER GABRIEL** and **KATE BUSH**'s song *Don't Give Up* meant the world to me at that time – I didn't want to give up my studies in classical music but I also didn't want to give up this new challenge in my life.

"The **GLADIATOR** soundtrack, particularly *Now We Are Free*, is one of the most beautiful musical pieces in general, not just in movie scores. It hit me so hard and it was totally inspiring but I couldn't walk out of the cinema after watching it, I remember being stuck in my chair and I couldn't find my legs because I was weeping so hard. I also think *Bohemian Rhapsody* is one of the greatest songs ever written in musical history. I listened to it in my youth, realising **QUEEN** introduced the world to opera and masses of people across the world were singing those operatic vocals in this incredible piece of art that nobody wanted to release as the single! They followed their hearts and I realised as a young girl that I could also combine two styles of music just like them.

"When I was studying at university in Germany, **RAMMSTEIN**'s song *Reise, Reise* was released and I felt connected not only to the German lyrics but also to the power in their guitars. I started to get very interested in their production and how they made their music sound so good because it was something extraordinary at that time. They were the first influential metal band I dared to listen to, that's where my metal career started. When I later left Nightwish, there was no other way for me but to leave Finland, too. I was asked a few years ago to do a TV commercial in Finland where they gave me headphones and played music to film my reaction on a close-up camera. They played **SIBELIUS**'s *Finlandia* and I started crying like crazy because it sounded like my home country. I went through my entire life during that song – it was an unbelievable experience that made me realise how much it hurt to leave my country behind.

"**IN FLAMES** were a great influence on me with their guitars and live shows and *Alias* led me to become a huge fan, to the point I worked with their founder and [ex-guitarist] Jesper Strömblad for the song *Neverlight*, from my album, *Colours In The Dark*. I soon became very involved in making my own productions sound perfect for my needs, so I was seeking the perfect team to work with. When I found out **SLIPKNOT** had been working with mixing engineer Colin Richardson for many years, as soon as I heard *Psychosocial*, I had to call him and work with him to mix some of my songs.

"I'm a perfectionist and I'm still trying to make progress as a singer to this day, so **DVOŘÁK**'s *Song To The Moon*, from the opera *Rusalka*, has been a very difficult aria for me for many years. I dared to try it once a couple of years ago to see how hard it would be, but it wasn't painful for me anymore and that made me realise I'm doing something good by working hard to make my lyrical singing technique better on a daily basis." MH

"IT HURT TO LEAVE MY COUNTRY BEHIND"

TARJA'S LATEST ALBUM, *IN THE RAW*, IS OUT AUGUST 30 VIA EARMUSIC

PRESS/TIM TRONCKOE

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LIFE LESSONS

JACOB BANNON

He's an artist, frontman and multitasker *par excellence*, but is fatherhood the greatest challenge the Converge man has faced to date?

WORDS: ALEX DELLER

OVER THE PAST three decades, Jacob Bannon has rearranged the face of heavy music with Converge, decorated album sleeves with his artwork and helped shape tastes co-running Deathwish Inc. Never one to stay still, his second album beneath the Wear Your Wounds banner, *Rust On The Gates Of Heaven*, has just dropped, and this time he's joined by a full band that features folks from Cave In, Trap Them, Hatebreed and The Red Chord. All in a day's work…

HUSTLE TO SUCCEED

"When Converge started, we were super-young and super-poor and just trying to figure shit out. I was putting in 20+ miles a day on my bike to get to school, plus working in furniture stores, unloading trucks and whatnot while also trying to be a creative person. It was a hustle – a big, big hustle. And it continues to be. I think it's really important to be like that for a while and to understand the reality of what most of this is. I'm glad I was doing all of that, because then I could shift gears and be OK with the fact that it's always an uphill battle."

TRY TO FIND A DIFFERENT VOICE

"A lot of the emotion and nuance I put into Converge gets lost because of the volume. People just think I'm a monster, they don't realise that there's at least some intended prose and some intended meaning behind the vitriol and anger. Wear Your Wounds has a different voice and it hits home in a different way."

APPRECIATE GREAT COLLABORATORS

"To get this bunch of people with broad musical, creative vocabularies who've already sharpened their teeth on their own material to come together and build something different has been fun and unique. The fact that everybody understands the artistic character of what I'm trying to accomplish with Wear Your Wounds is awesome, as is having all of them just jumping in and writing songs and being open to collaborating. They don't want to just be machines playing music that I write; they add their own soul and that's really special to me."

PRESSURE IS PART OF LIFE

"I don't feel like I'm coming off the rails very much. Don't get me wrong, I'm not above feeling like that – it's a reality that many people deal with every day. It might be a client deadline, or it might be the guy downstairs parking in my space for the 40th time in a row when I'm trying to carry 6,000 things into the office. I think I would feel that pressure pretty much anywhere, I don't think it's something that's unique to music. I *do* know that I have to multitask to exist, but I don't have any hang-ups about that. I definitely know artists who get bitter about wanting to do certain things or not wanting to be dependent on making commercial art or whatever, but that's life. It is what it is. You can't really control the landscape like that; you either create a self-sufficient alternative or accept it for what it is."

DON'T GET HUNG UP ON PERFECTION

"One thing I think can be the mind killer for a creative person is trying to find perfection. More often than not what you define as a flaw in what you do is what else someone sees as a strength. It's all about the process, and it's all about getting past resistance. It's about trying to be OK with that, and evolving as an artist and making better stuff every time you make something. By 'better' I don't mean technically proficient, but trying to capture exactly what you want to capture."

"PERFECTION IS A MIND-KILLER"

STEP BACK AND TAKE STOCK OF WHAT MATTERS

"I think that we often lose perspective, and we think that our time and our importance and self-worth is dictated by certain things, and our lives are weighed by certain scales. But the scales don't really mean much, or they don't really mean anything at all."

PUT YOUR HEAD DOWN AND RUN

"In terms of whether there's an end point, I don't know. I suppose I'll know if and when I get to one. But for now I just like making stuff and I still have something relevant to say. At least relevant to *me*. I'm not an artist that has to write a song every day, or has to paint every day, or needs to make a crazy collage that looks like *this* today. I have to do that for clients to a degree, but I don't have to do that for myself. Maybe one day I'll get to the point where all I do is utilitarian, non-personal art – you never know. But right now I'm moderately young, I have the time and energy to do it, and I'm already in it – this is all I've got."

DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUR HEROES

"Usually people are shocked at how we [Converge] are as people – we're really silly. You often have some sort of perception of an artist that isn't accurate, because you just know them through their art. It's been pretty rare where I've actually wanted to meet a musician. The few times that I've tried to do that or felt compelled to do that, I never really got what I intended to get out of it. Most of the time I would rather just have the relationship with a record or a song, and keep that intact."

PAY IT FORWARD IF YOU CAN

"Starkweather [longstanding Philly metalcore act] are the real deal. They're one of those bands that exist in the darkness, and when they choose to surface they do whatever they want and it'll be totally moving. When I had the opportunity to release some music for them, I was adamant it would happen. With Burn and 108, they're unique bands and historically very important. The fact that I can help do something positive for them has been a dream for me – the same goes for Ringworm and Integrity as well."

DON'T SWEAT THE IMITATORS

"It's weird – if you acknowledge it you're egotistical, if you ignore it you're being flippant and disregarding other peoples' artistic efforts. But it is what it is – nobody's original, everybody's lifting something from

PRESS/REID HAITHCOCK

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JACOB BANNON

Harsh that Jacob hasn't taken
a new photo since 1897

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somewhere or at the very least taking some sort of inspiration from something. I take it as a source of flattery to a degree, and there have only been a few times where I've felt a little slighted because it's been such a direct lift. But what are you going to do? It's the internet age and everyone thinks they own everything on the screen in front of them. But I've never really paid too much direct attention, because if you start reflecting on that sort of thing, if you start looking at what you've created from that perspective, that's the first big leap out the door in terms of being a relevant artist – when you start getting bitter about this or that instead of putting your head down and doing the work. If someone wants to lift something from us, cool – hopefully that shapes things in a good way. But they'll never be us or Deathwish or any of our bands. Who knows, they might be *better*, but they'll never be us."

KEEP THE SPARK ALIVE

"There's a Peter Pan syndrome with anyone who carries on with what they started doing as a kid. I found the spark for art and music when I was young, and it's a very real, true thing for me. When I heard heavy music for the first time, I knew it was something I connected with. I found a commonality with this community, and I never let go of it because I never *wanted* to – it's what I truly enjoy, and I feel I can give something back to it. You can also see what happens when people stop, when that spirit's left them. I mean, if someone stops making music or art because it makes them a happier or more productive person then that's great. But more often than not it symbolises giving up something they loved to do, and if they don't replace it with something that they love equally then their life can go in a different direction."

BEING A PARENT IS ABOUT GROWTH, CHANGE AND CHALLENGE

"It hopefully allows you to grow emotionally and psychologically, and challenges you in ways you never thought you'd be challenged. It brings you an immense amount of happiness, and also frustration. You learn a lot about yourself, the things you need to improve upon and the strength you never knew you had. And it's not a lobotomy – it's a true trial and a true test of who you are as a person. You think you're this great person with these great values? Now here's your chance to prove it: here's a mirror that's going to soak up everything that you do, and it's going to shine It back at you with a light brighter than you could ever imagine. Are you ready for that? If you're not ready, get ready, because you won't have a choice. You have to welcome it with a smile and be OK with it, and that's the challenge most people face: it's a challenge of themselves."

***RUST ON THE GATES OF HEAVEN* IS OUT NOW VIA DEATHWISH INC.**

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IN THE STUDIO

ALCEST

The French genre-shifters are embracing their blackened side again. Get excited

WORDS: ALI COOPER

AS IF ABDUCTED by aliens seeking information on humanity's interest in metal, French genre-bending, mind-fucking outfit Alcest have their ethereal sixth album ready and waiting to take to the skies. Meanwhile, back down on Earth, they're hopping across Europe this summer and heading to Leeds' Damnation Festival in November. Mastermind and founding cosmic being Neige somehow found the time to tell us what to expect from this new, darker era of Alcest.

How ready is Alcest's sixth album right now?
"We've received the masters of the new record so we're doing the final touches. We started writing more or less straight after releasing *Kodama* in 2016. I don't take breaks from my writing because it's like a diary, but I only keep about 20% of my material. Most of the bands I like tend to sound less inspired with every album, so it's something I really don't want for my own music – the more time that passes, the more hard work I put in to make sure the focus doesn't disappear. I'm not promising we'll only make good records, but we'll try!"

Why have you produced it yourselves?
"We like to control everything about our sound and we're super-picky. It can be a good thing but, also, we're putting a lot of pressure on ourselves and we suffer a lot but I hope the fans will notice the effort. We've almost literally bled for it because we spent so much time in the studio, we went a little crazy during recording.

THE FACTS
ALBUM: Six
PRODUCER: Self-produced
STUDIO: Drudenhaus Studios, Nantes, France
EXPECT: Black metal crossed with shoegaze in its darkest form yet

Alcest's Neige: all the questions, none of the answers

It wasn't easy in the beginning but now even people who don't like Alcest respect us a lot because we've always done what we've wanted to do and there's no compromise involved."

You changed the band's genre to shoegaze two albums ago for *Shelter*. Are Alcest back to your own signature brand of 'blackgaze' this time around?
"Yes, we are. You need to start from zero again with every record, but the most important thing is not to calculate what you're going to do and just let the events of your life shape your new sound. When *Shelter* came out, people said we were selling out but I said, 'Do you know what it means for a metal band to make a pop record?' It means losing your fans, we couldn't have taken a bigger risk. The new album has some fresh elements and it has a strong story behind it, but it's also the heaviest thing we've done so far. We've been living in pretty dark times lately and, on a personal level, I wasn't feeling very good for the last few years, so this turned out to be a dark record."

Your previous albums are often based on your own spiritual experiences. Are there even darker aspects we haven't heard yet?
"I'm keeping a bit of the darkness for myself, but there's more on this next record than I usually let out. Alcest is about real experiences and struggles I face in my life to live a down-to-earth existence while being in contact with something I discovered as a child. My goal in Alcest was to bring a little piece of that other world into this world in my very human and clumsy way."

If this new album could be a movie, which would it be and why?
"*Contact* with Jodie Foster. It wasn't the best movie in the world but it has an unknown being, communication with aliens and a cosmic vibe about the stars and another world. Our new album has all of that, it's about the mystery of taking a spiritual path, knowing you won't get any answers to your questions. Religions give you instructions to follow and you don't ask questions, whereas if you take a spiritual way like I have, you understand you won't have answers but don't take anything for granted. There's a lot of frustration and darkness in this record but that's because you have to face a lack of answers to things in life, everybody wonders about things like death. Spirituality helps you become the best version of yourself."

ALCEST'S NEW ALBUM WILL BE RELEASED LATER THIS YEAR VIA NUCLEAR BLAST

PRESS/WILLIAM LACALMONTIE

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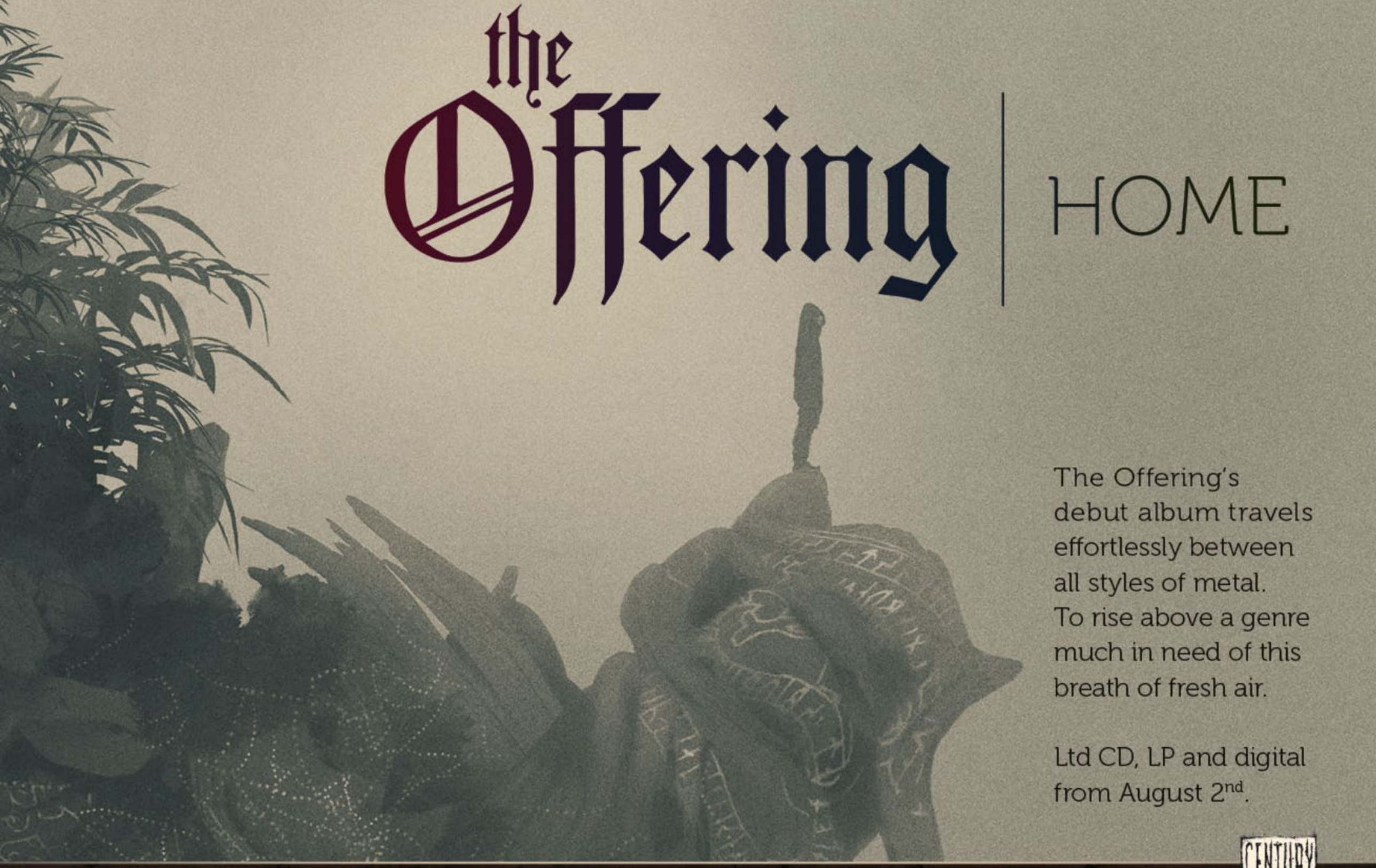

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THE STORY BEHIND

PARTY HARD BY ANDREW W.K.

In the aftermath of 9/11, America became a nation of fear and paranoia. The last thing it seemed to need was a teetotal rocker singing about partying…

WORDS: HENRY YATES

IT'S OCTOBER 2001. One month has passed since the 9/11 terror attacks on New York. Grief and fury mix like a Molotov cocktail on the streets of America. George W Bush's war machine rolls into Afghanistan to extract Osama Bin Laden, while back home, popular culture is defanged to soothe a raw nation, with a list of nearly 160 'lyrically inappropriate songs' allegedly delivered to US radio stations. The West will spend the next decade looking over its shoulder. The party is over.

Andrew W.K. just wasn't made for those times. His breakthrough single, *Party Hard*, was ostensibly everything that post-9/11 society could not tolerate, particularly if viewed in tandem with its music video. Dressed in grubby whites like some anti-Messiah, the singer inspects deep facial cuts in the mirror of a sinister, strip-lit bathroom. A robot voice gabbles: *'When-it's-time-to-party-we-will-party-hard'*. Then begins an adrenalin shot of pop-metal whose chant of *'Let's get a party going!'* seemed deeply out of place amid the debris and body bags.

The consensus was split: W.K. was either a beer-chugging rock pig in the Mötley Crüe tradition, or an irony-monger deconstructing the clichés of the rock lifestyle. In fact, he was neither, revealing himself in the press as Andrew Wilkes-Krier, a soft-spoken former piano prodigy from Michigan.

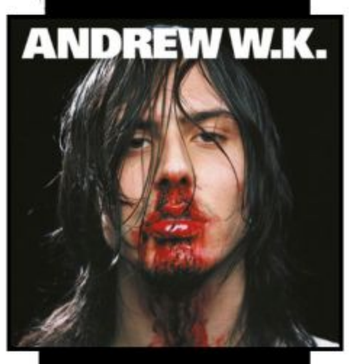
THE FACTS

RELEASED:
2001

ALBUM:
I Get Wet

LINEUP:
Andrew W.K. (vocals, synth), Jimmy Coup (guitar), Erik Payne (guitar), Frank Werner (guitar), Gregg Roberts (bass), Donald Tardy (drums)

HIGHEST CHART POSITION:
19 (UK)



Similarly, while most listeners inferred that *Party Hard* was about alcohol, it's never mentioned in the lyrics.

"In 1998, I had just moved from Michigan to New York," Andrew recalls. "I had never been drunk, I didn't do any drugs and I didn't have any friends. I didn't know anybody; I just didn't have that network I'd had back in Michigan. I spent a huge amount of time at home alone, which was pretty much what I did all my life. I never was a very social person. I had always felt awkward at parties; social interaction was tricky for me. But I loved the atmosphere of being at a party, the way it felt in the air, so creating music that encouraged partying was a no-brainer.

"I didn't want anyone to feel they had to act a certain way to 'party'," he says of *Party Hard*'s lyrics. "I'd had many life experiences that told me something about me was wrong, or I couldn't be part of this club, all that crap. I hated being at a party and someone coming up and saying, 'Why aren't you drinking, why aren't you dancing?' That's complete BS. So I thought, 'I'm gonna make a song telling people to party, but party however they want.' I never dictated what people should specifically do."

THAT SENTIMENT WAS writ large in the pre-chorus payoff (*'Do what we like and we like what we do'*). Andrew nods: "To me, there's an element of celebration in the song, which comes from doing what appeals to you. So much of the time, I've felt like I had limitations on what I could do, or circumstances prevented me from doing what I really wanted in life. But I didn't want to sing about that. Why sing about how frustrated I am? Why sing about the trouble I'm having? Why sing about what I *can't* do? Why not create a song that makes me feel like I can do anything? And the more I've made that kind of music, the happier I've been in life."

The lyrics of *Party Hard* were settled, but Andrew had his moment of musical clarity in the pit at an alt-rock show. "I have a very clear memory. The first concert I ever went to in New York, it was at Irving Plaza or the Bowery Ballroom, and the headlining band was Sonic Youth. And even though the

ALAMY

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Party hard, people. However you want, whenever you want

music was nothing like what I'd end up making, the crowd was going insane, and I had this feeling of, 'OK, if I had a chance to be on that stage, what sound would make people go insane?' *Party Hard* was one of the first songs I wrote after that. The goal of the song was a physical reaction. I've had experiences where music doesn't just change the thoughts in my head, it changes the way my body feels. With *Party Hard*, I wanted to push that as far as I possibly could… to change your whole state of being."

Andrew himself needed escapism more than most. "I was working at the time at a very fancy department store in New York," he remembers. "There were many things about the job that I hated very deeply, and to deal with those, I would tune out, go to a different place in my head. I would write songs while I was working – whistle while you work, literally. I wanted *Party Hard* to start with a riff that was one note. I had a vision of being onstage and the sound is just 'duh! duh! duh!' No chord changes, everyone playing just one note with as much intensity as they could. I wanted it to be this heartbeat.

"I DIDN'T DRINK. I DIDN'T DO DRUGS"

"There was no question as to whether I would include piano," he continues. "Before I heard any records, I was playing piano, learning scales. The good thing with this music is that piano does have the ability to have a lot of energy; we've heard it used in rock music since the beginning. The first rock'n'roll music ever played was played on piano. Electric guitars didn't even exist. It's a real rock'n'roll instrument, it's percussive, it has power. And it's all I could play."

That didn't stop Andrew recording every instrument on an initial demo of *Party Hard*: a "skeleton" he says remains on the final version, albeit beneath the parts played later by session musicians. "I didn't think of it as a classic," he says, "but I was clear this was going to be 'my song' and should be the first single. That this should be the song that people should associate with me. I had a strong feeling it would make other people go crazy and run around the room. It's got a giddy kind of energy, like it's the last day of school, or you're about to go down a rollercoaster. That feeling of breaking through all the bullshit and ▶

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Partying is in Andrew's sole... er, soul

"THEY THOUGHT PUTTING THIS SONG OUT WAS SUICIDE"

confusion that tells us that it's not amazing to be alive."

BUT THAT WAS before 9/11. After the Twin Towers fell, voices higher up the record company food chain questioned whether it was appropriate to encourage America to 'get the party going'. "There was a big debate," says Andrew, "because they thought putting that song out would be suicide and I would never recover. In the early days there was a lot of debate over how safe we should play it. I would get coached on what I should say in interviews. They'd say, 'Don't talk too much about having fun or enjoying your life, because there's a lot of people out there who are miserable and they're not gonna appreciate you saying that.'"

But Andrew saw it another way: "At that moment, celebrating what you had was never more important. To be grateful for the life we have and this incredible city... it's all just hanging by a thread. Is singing about having fun just a big waste of time, and a disgrace? Or is putting people in touch with the parts within them that make them feel good in fact a very worthwhile pursuit? The feelings of joy and power that come from music – that's what allows humanity to rise up and be at its best. If everybody was singing songs on 9/11 instead of flying planes into buildings, it wouldn't have happened."

Party Hard got its release, and Andrew's instincts were vindicated by the response, with the song storming the US and UK charts and thrusting its author onto an *NME* cover with the (admittedly hyperbolic) headline: 'The Saviour Of Rock'. Eighteen years later – a period in which the song has notched up 17 million-plus Spotify plays – the singer is neither jaded by its ubiquity nor tired of chalking it onto the setlist: "Drop it? Oh God, no. I love it more every day. It's given me so much, brought me so many opportunities and happiness, and I hope into the lives of other people. I bow down to this song. I don't feel like it's mine, it's just a song I got to play. I could never imagine a day not playing it. I'll die playing that song – and that would be a great privilege."

ANDREW W.K.'S LATEST ALBUM, *YOU'RE NOT ALONE*, IS OUT NOW VIA SONY

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YOUR SHOUT

PUT ALESTORM ON YOUR COVER

...plus other bold demands you lovely, lovely people had for Team *Hammer* this month

Rammstein: We're sure the royal family would jump at the chance to host these fine fellows

WHYOWA

Nine Slipknot covers? Are you serious? How am I supposed to be expected to spank on *NINE* covers? I did, obviously, because I'm a superfan and I can't help myself. My wall thanks you, *Hammer* – my wallet doesn't though. Pricks.
One Angry Maggot (email)

Hey, we're not holding a gun to anyone's head. We just love those new masks so much (no, really!), we thought it was only fair we gave them the chance to shine. Thanks for your support though, you bonkers little legend.

HEADWHINER

People are often chatty about which bands will headline Download down the line, but am I the only one who's more interested in who'll do Bloodstock in years to come? Will we see more 'scene bands' like Trivium and Parkway Drive step up, or will extreme metal be given a proper chance? I'd love to see Rotting Christ be given a go.
George Patsen (email)

So what you're saying is... #WhyNotRottingChrist? Ah come on, we had to do it. It was an open goal. Allow us. We're not sure what a 'scene band' is, though.

ZERO FOX GIVEN

It is the year of our lord 2019 and whining men are still throwing their toys out of the pram over Babymetal. Can we just accept they're here to stay and, remember, IF YOU DON'T LIKE THEM NO ONE IS FORCING YOU TO LISTEN TO THEM OR GO TO THEIR CONCERTS GOODNIGHT GOD BLESS AND THANK YOU.
Jess Evans (email)

The day we can stop the internet moaning is the day Rammstein do an acoustic show at Buckingham Palace and actually that sounds like an amazing idea and we're going to pitch that to Rammstein right now.

RUFC

Just a theory here: the Roadrunner United album from 2005 is a great album to give someone as an introduction into metal as it covers quite a few different styles. Thoughts?
Mark Waite (Facebook)

We back it. And we think it's long overdue a sequel, don't you? If Roadrunner aren't up for it, how about Nuclear Blast United? Metal Blade United? We'd do one but none of us can play shit. That's why we do this instead, to be honest.

TANKS A LOT

Two months on and I'm still playing with my free tank from your Sabaton issue. Does that make me A) the most dedicated reader ever B) a soldier-in-waiting or C) a massive loser?
Matt Pilsborough (email)

A little from column A, a little from column B... probably quite a lot from column C, to be honest. But as fellow proud losers, we're right with you.

#TWEETS

James Hetfield is starting to look like Alex Jones
@Amby_84

Honestly though "people upset" is 90% of comments on any hard rock and metal news lol
@Rachiness1

I'm Japanese and I love metal... but Babymetal are not an "icon". Their instrumental bandmates are more iconic than these girls. Cute voice with metal just does not click whatsoever.
@zzyian_xxeno

I don't even know how I feel should about down after Mr Phil's white power speech. I loved Down, saw them play live a few times. Amazing shows, amazing times. But honestly I haven't listened to them for a long time.
@nepalicook

Would you rather fight ten duck-sized Corey Taylors or one Corey Taylor-sized duck?
@RobbieLoucks

RAMMSTEIN: PRESS/JENS KOCH

WorldMags.net

Korn: masters of reinvention

MO MONEY, MO PROBLEMS

Metallica donated to charity in every city they visited on their last tour. They sell out every show, they've put in the hard yards over 35+ years and have the quality to back it up. What do people expect them to do? Play 2,000 capacity venues with tickets at £20 a pop? Good luck trying to get to see them then.
Michael Lee (Facebook)

Fair point. We'd be well up for paying £20 to see Metallica in a 20k-cap venue though. Just saying.

THRASH BANG WALLOP

Thrash wasn't so much killed in the 90s as it was buried alive by the industry. Thanks to a new wave of thrash the next decade – and the perseverance of Slayer, who never toned down or compromised their style – the old school is now bigger than ever. And the majority of those grunge and nu metal acts… where are they now?
Gerald Albert (Facebook)

To be fair, a good few of them are still headlining arenas, but yeah, thrash had never and will never die. Although we think if you're insisting Slayer never compromised their style you've never listened to *Diabolus In Musica*.

KORN REBORN

How incredible is it that two decades into their career Korn are still reinventing themselves? I love the sound of the new material, it's darker than anything they've done in years. I'm just saying I'm here for goth Korn, that's all.
Amy Johansen (Facebook)

Korn do seem to be ageing like a fine wine, don't they? Although we're not sure if we need them to go Full Goth quite yet. Save the spoopy piano sections for the next album.

PIECES OF HATE

You've done Amon Amarth (Vikings) and Sabaton (soldiers) already this year. Surely it's time for Alestorm to get their first *Metal Hammer* cover? They pull big crowds, they have killer songs, they have a giant rubber duck. What more do you need?
Craig Rose (Facebook)

Look, we've all had a drink (of rum?), let's not get carried away with ourselves here.

THE BIG DEBATE

Last month on metalhammer.com, Rich Hobson explored the growing importance of metal on a global scale, and why we need a multicultural metal scene more than ever. Here's what you guys had to say about it.

HE SAID

"The scene has expanded far beyond the traditional spawning grounds of the US, UK and Western Europe, carrying voices from each individual nation to help make modern heavy metal culture a truly universal phenomenon. And it's about time."

YOU SAY

Countries like Indonesia, India and Japan have had amazing metal bands for years – people are only just noticing. Some of us were on this train a decade ago!
Jamie Fenwick (Facebook)

Babymetal get all the attention but there are so many more cool idol metal bands in Japan, such as Band-Maid and Necronomidol.
Christian Jackson (Facebook)

We need to love good metal wherever it's from. If a band's from Brazil and good, I'll like them. If they're from Brazil and crap, I won't like them. Easy.
Flic Jannett (Facebook)

I'm so happy that Middle Eastern metal is finally getting more of a shout-out! There's so much great stuff from that part of the world.
Emily Clarksen (Facebook)

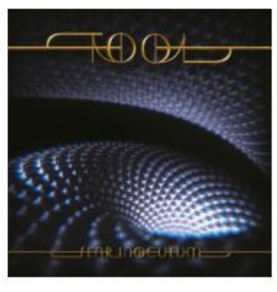
To be honest I still feel like the 'global metal bands' are a long way from producing music that can rival the true greats. Hopefully it'll come, though!
Janick Stepp (Facebook)

JOIN THE BIG DEBATE AT FACEBOOK.COM/METALHAMMERREADERS

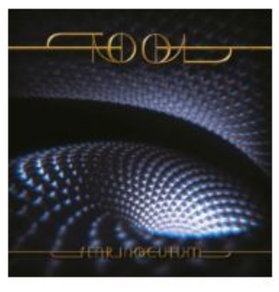
HAMMER STEREO

What's been blowing our office speakers

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
Atonement
"They just do this better than everyone else, don't they?"
MERLIN ALDERSLADE
EDITOR



TOOL
Fear Inoculum
"Polyrhythms on top of polyrhythms on top of WTF"
ELEANOR GOODMAN
DEPUTY EDITOR



TOOL
Fear Inoculum
"An album so Olympian it's pretty much a 'fuck you' to mere mortals"
JONATHAN SELZER
REVIEWS EDITOR

BARONESS
Gold & Grey
"Absolutely stunning. An emotional epic"
VANESSA THORPE
PRODUCTION EDITOR

3TEETH
MetaWar
"*President X* gets my vote every time!"
LOUISE BROCK
ART EDITOR

ASAGRAUM
Dawn of Infinite Fire
"All-female psychedelic black metal?! *swoons*"
ALICE PATTILLO
ONLINE EDITOR

KORN: PRESS/DEAN KARR

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NOV . 18 GLASGOW THE SSE HYDRO
NOV . 22 LONDON THE SSE ARENA, WEMBLEY
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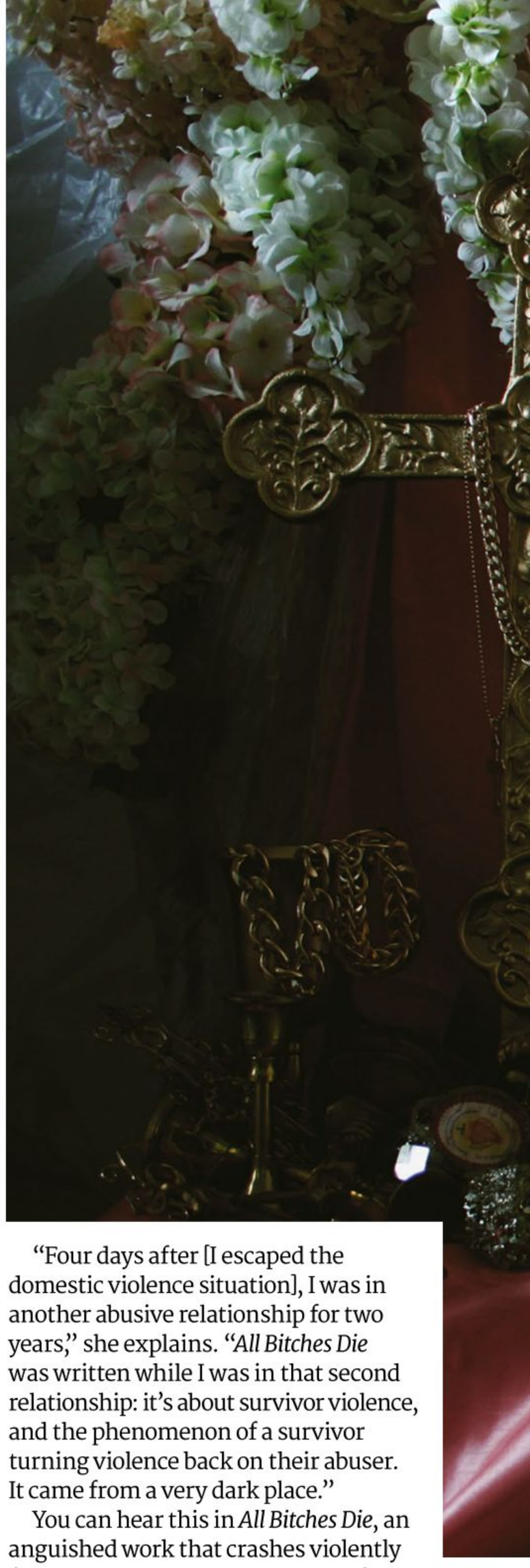
NEW NOISE

LINGUA IGNOTA

Pornogrind, serial killers and funeral marches. Welcome to one of 2019's most fascinatingly intense music experiences

WORDS: HANNAH MAY KILROY



WHEN *FAITHFUL SERVANT* *Friend Of Christ*, the opening track of Lingua Ignota's new album, *Caligula*, segues into *Do You Doubt Me Traitor*, the vocals of its creator, Kristin Hayter, twist from hauntingly operatic into a wracked lamentation and howls of vengeance. It's raw, harrowing, and sets the tone for an elaborate and labyrinthine album of almost unbearable intensity.

"I try to take the cruelty that's used against you to make yourself powerful," Kristin explains. With Lingua Ignota, she speaks directly to survivors of domestic violence and abuse, incorporating industrial, noise, metal and classical elements into a disparate but carefully constructed work of art. Growing up Catholic in California, Kristin discovered her aptitude for singing in a church choir and began classical training from the age of 10. Even then, she was interested in the darker side of music.

"I wasn't into the stuff that my teachers wanted me to sing – cute and frilly music," she explains. "I wanted to sing melancholic stuff, like Russian art songs and strange things from the 1100s!" Kristin prepared all through high school to sing classic music professionally, but decided instead to study art.

"My experience at art school was invaluable to the way I make things," she says of her time at the Art Institute of Chicago. "I was interested in taking things that didn't make sense together and trying to make something new."

Kristin developed these conceptual ideas further when she did a Master of Fine Arts at Brown University while also becoming involved in the DIY noise scene in Providence. It was through her thesis there, entitled *Burn Everything Trust No One Kill Yourself*, that Lingua Ignota, Latin for 'unknown language', properly began.

"At the time I was in a nasty domestic violence situation that I was trying to get out of," Kristin says. "I was finding that it was difficult to get help. So I started making work about domestic violence and misogynist attitudes."

Kristin took passages of misogynist text from sources like pornogrind lyrics and extreme music message boards, and culled the hateful language through a predictive text system known as a Markov chain.

"I took Stravinsky's *The Rites Of Spring*, which is also about violence against women," she continues, "and I put all of this language into the structure for *The Rites Of Spring*, and made songs. Some of these songs are on my first EP [*Let the Evil of His Own Lips Cover Him*, 2017]."

Soon after this she made her first album, *All Bitches Die*, taking violent content and reclaiming it, while in desperate circumstances herself.

"Four days after [I escaped the domestic violence situation], I was in another abusive relationship for two years," she explains. "*All Bitches Die* was written while I was in that second relationship: it's about survivor violence, and the phenomenon of a survivor turning violence back on their abuser. It came from a very dark place."

You can hear this in *All Bitches Die*, an anguished work that crashes violently from crushing noise to passages of intricate melodic beauty.

"I take a deconstructed approach to making music," Kristin says on her sound. "It's not like I want to make noise or metal or a particular genre, but I look at devices within different genres to see what will be the most effective for a song. I look at what I think constitutes heavy music and how to convey this very upsetting content, how to play with that, or how I can flip it into something else so that it sounds totally different."

WITH HER NEW, second album, *Caligula*, Kristin has constructed a vast, multi-layered explorative body of work that examines abuse of power, using the Roman emperor Caligula as core inspiration.

"I wanted to address the gross climate that we live in, with abuse of

IN SHORT

SOUNDS LIKE: A powerful yet raw and profound piece of work that encompasses classical, noise and extreme metal

FOR FANS OF: Diamanda Galas, The Body, Amenra

LISTEN TO: *Do You Doubt Me Traitor*

WorldMags.net

Kristin Hayter: in her element

power everywhere. Caligula was this horrible, depraved person in power, but also his entire family was murdered, and his close council later murdered him, so the album is about this endless cycle of violence begetting violence.

"I was thinking of the structural format of an opera, of operatic terms like an overture and leitmotifs," she continues, "and those things appear on the record." The album is also full of references; the first released track, *Butcher Of The World*, takes influence from Henry Purcell's *The Funeral March For Queen Mary*, which Kristin says has a long history of cultural violence and gender, and was used in the films *Caligula* and *A Clockwork Orange*.

"[The album is] so elaborate, and I feel like such a dork with all the references I put in there," Kristin laughs. "But there are also jokes," she adds, referring to *SORROW! SORROW! SORROW!* The song is a heart-rending, grating vocal performance, which is then interrupted by the voice of a well-known musician complaining while eating a sandwich.

"I felt it was so perfect," laughs Kristin. "Not only making fun of myself, but also I think people are going to say it ruins the song. That's the point. That's how it feels to have people talking through my live set."

Kristin's live shows have become a talking point. She plays in the centre of her audience, in darkness apart from lights that she swings around, with video projections of the California wildfires, and recordings of serial killer

"WE ALL HAVE TO SHARE SUFFERING TOGETHER"

KRISTIN HAYTER

Aileen Wuornos – "Aileen is the ultimate paradigm of the victim monster: somebody who was failed her entire life by everyone around her, and went mad from the abuse she endured. I wanted to create an immersive experience that changes the relationship between the audience and the performer," Kristin continues. "Some performers are confrontational with the audience, but I don't like to do that. We all have to share suffering together somehow, so you might be lit, or I might come up behind you. But I'm not going to smack you or anything. That's just for me!"

She laughs, but did she did recently injure herself on her European tour, getting a concussion when she hit herself in the head with a light.

"I had a compound concussion," she says, "and I tried to keep going but I couldn't and had to cancel my last shows. It was a learning experience. I'm working on new modes of preserving myself while playing, while still maintaining that level of intensity."

For Kristin, the intensity of Lingua Ignota has been a way to heal.

"When women and marginalised people suffer, we don't get to see justice in the way that we want. The people who we want held accountable are not. So for me, the music has been the way I've been able to get through this, to find justice, and to find any amount of peace."

***CALIGULA* IS OUT NOW VIA PROFOUND LORE**

PRESS

WorldMags.net

NEW NOISE

CURSE THESE METAL HANDS

Two of the UK's best young bands have united. And you're gonna love the results

WORDS: MATT MILLS

"WITH MOST BANDS, the easiest part is finding people and getting ready for a gig; the hardest part is coming up with a name that isn't shit."

Most metalheads that know of Brady Deeprose and Nick Watmough will do so because of their respective work in Conjurer and Pijn: two of the UK's most acclaimed young, heavy bands. But today they sit together, jovially discussing the genesis of their new crossover project, Curse These Metal Hands.

"We thought on the name for ages Brady continues. "We're all big *Peep Show* fans; we had a conversation about that programme's silly band names and agreed that 'Curse These Metal Hands' is the best."

Comprised of three members of Pijn and two from Conjurer, the band combine the patient post-metal of the former with the riff-happy drive of the latter. They came together as a one-off to decimate 2018's ArcTanGent with a half-hour of bull-headed guitarwork.

"They planned to have more collaborative sets," Nick recalls, before laughing: "That didn't happen because nobody would collaborate – except for Conjurer."

"It came together much better than we expected Brady adds. "By ArcTanGent, we felt like we were 70% there. We said, 'If we had another six months to work on this, we can really make something!' It seemed like a no-brainer."

The union was so promising that the quintet felt it'd be wasteful to disband after just one show. So, they entered the studio, creating their self-titled album. *Curse These Metal Hands* is a half-hour balancing act, bridging trudging riffs with optimistic lyricism to make something outside of both troupes' comfort zones.

"We asked, 'What would we like to do, but can't in our own bands?'" says Brady. Nick adds: "We wanted to do something that doesn't sound like Pijn or Conjurer. If we just did blastbeats and growls with ambient bits, it would have been boring."

They may hide behind a goofy moniker, but Curse These Metal Hands have thus far been responsible for some of the most empowering (and surprising) grooves of 2019.

IN SHORT

SOUNDS LIKE: An inspiring catharsis comprised of grooving riffs and hopeful lyrics

FOR FANS OF: Cult of Luna, Baroness, Russian Circles

LISTEN TO: *Sunday*

***CURSE THESE METAL HANDS* IS OUT AUGUST 16 VIA HOLY ROAR**

PALADIN

Deathly power metal about videogames? Metal nerds rejoice!

WORDS: DOM LAWSON

A ROBUST RESPONSE to anyone who thinks old-school heavy metal is running out of energy, Atlanta quartet Paladin have just released one of the most explosive albums of the year. An immaculate barrage of ferocious riffing, soaring melodies and hellish aggression, *Ascension* sounds like a wholesale reboot for some well-worn tropes. Frontman/guitarist and songwriter Taylor Washington leads the charge with a frankly mindblowing vocal performance that swings from deathly snarls to spiralling falsetto in the blink of an evil eye.

"I'd originally written these songs with only harsh vocals in mind," Taylor tells *Hammer*. "But I've always loved bands like Into Eternity and Scar Symmetry, where they mix both together. But I think it can go either way! There are people who're like, 'Man, it would be so great if there weren't any clean vocals!' and then there are people saying 'Oh, the harsh vocals are bad!' Whatever. *We* like it!"

Formed in 2015, Paladin have arrived at the perfect time. As Taylor points out, "There's definitely an old-school revival going on in the States, and it's great!"

But if Paladin's state-of-the-art blend of ancient and modern metal doesn't instantly win you over, they have their conceptual shit together, too. Self-proclaimed mega-nerds, they have peppered their debut album with songs about arcane videogames. The opening track is a straightforward paean to *The Legend Of Zelda*, while *Black Omen* "is about a game called *Chrono Trigger* for Super Nintendo. Yeah, we're nerds!" Taylor laughs. "A lot of it has to do with good versus evil, light versus dark."

"*Call Of The Night* is about a creature that attacks a guy and then the guy becomes the creature," he adds. "It's a classic story. *Vagrant* is just about a guy dying in a snowstorm. I basically saw the first Wintersun album cover and wrote a song about it, ha ha!"

IN SHORT

SOUNDS LIKE: Ripping, deathly power metal histrionics with a dash of *Zelda*

FOR FANS OF: Children Of Bodom, Helloween, Revocation

LISTEN TO: *Carpe Diem*

***ASCENSION* IS OUT NOW VIA PROSTHETIC**

CURSE THESE METAL HANDS: PRESS. PALADIN: PRESS/ DAVID PARHAM

ACRES

This screamo crew drastically switched up their formula to survive

WORDS: MATT MILLS

IN SHORT

SOUNDS LIKE:
A nostalgic, emo- and alt rock-flavoured take on 00s post-hardcore

FOR FANS OF:
Good Tiger, Asking Alexandria, Holding Absence

LISTEN TO:
Medicine

FROM GIANTS LIKE Metallica all the way to such underground darlings as The Contortionist, it's commonplace for a metal band to shift their sound during their career, but the aural transformation of hardcore troupe Acres came inordinately early.

They debuted, arms flailing, in 2012 with their self-titled EP: a five-song barrage of intense yet shoegaze-tinged screamo. Fronted by vocalist Richard Morgan, their initial, raw methodology was a far cry from the more subdued, post-hardcore bliss of their upcoming debut album, *Lonely World*.

"It was straight-up, emotional hardcore," says guitarist Theo Sandberg. "There wasn't any clean singing, so the focus was less on melody."

Acres released two EPs and a number of singles, and were gaining traction in the South Coast's hardcore scene. Then, in 2015, Richard quit, and it seemed the career of these upstarts was over before it'd properly begun. But fate stepped in.

"We saw a band called Out For Tomorrow," says Theo. "We were so impressed by their lead singer's voice that we got him into our band."

Acres were able to pull a talent raid, poaching Ben Lumber. It's Ben's clean, Danny Worsnop-esque vocalisations that drive *Lonely World*, which heralds a more hook-laden approach, while still maintaining splashes of Acres' emotional origins.

"I've always written my songs to be as honest as possible says Ben. "Emotion has always been a part of Acres – that's something I wanted to carry on."

***LONELY WORLD* IS OUT NOW VIA A WOLF AT YOUR DOOR**

SPOTLIGHTS

Bleary, blurry, beautiful heaviness – just don't call them shoegaze

WORDS: ALEX DELLER

ACRES: PRESS. SPOTLIGHTS: PRESS/MISER PHOTO. JFTD: PRESS. TAIM: PRESS/JAKE OWENS

IN SHORT

SOUNDS LIKE:
The Cure disintegrating into 90s post-hardcore vibes.

FOR FANS OF:
True Widow, Hum, Deftones

LISTEN TO:
The Age Of Dec

SOMETIMES THE STARS align and things turn out well. Case in point: Brooklyn's Spotlights, a band started by Sarah (bass/vocals) and Mario Quintero (guitars/vocals/programming) who met through music, "started smooching" in 2009 and began making music together at roughly the same time.

Since then they've toured with Deftones, signed with Mike Patton's Ipecac Records, added drummer Chris Enriquez and released three albums, culminating with the blissfully heavy *Love & Decay*.

"I feel like we've reached a pinnacle of the sound we hit on with [second album] *Tidals*," says Mario of their latest album. "I think things will evolve more drastically from here on out."

The record mixes delicate, hazy vibes and monolithic riffcraft while weaving tales of life, love and inevitable decline. It's comforting yet disorienting, and while comparisons might be drawn to shoegaze, Mario chuckles: "Neither Sarah or I know much about shoegaze bands. Any effects or synths we use stem from my influence of bands like The Cure, Failure and Shiner, and we sing like we do because neither of us are very good singers – it's more of a cop-out to not have to really sing sing."

Like we said – sometimes things just turn out well.

***LOVE & DECAY* IS OUT NOW VIA IPECAC**

IN THE KNOW

What your favourite bands are listening to

JUSTICE FOR THE DAMNED

"JUSTICE FOR THE Damned are an exciting young hardcore band with elements of what I guess I would call 'black'n'roll'. They're just finishing up their sophomore record with Will Putney [Miss May I, Bury Tomorrow, Vein], and I absolutely cannot wait to hear it."

ANDY MARSH, THY ART IS MURDER

WorldMags.net

HOARD ALMIGHTY

Box sets, underground oddities and all the essential merch you need this month

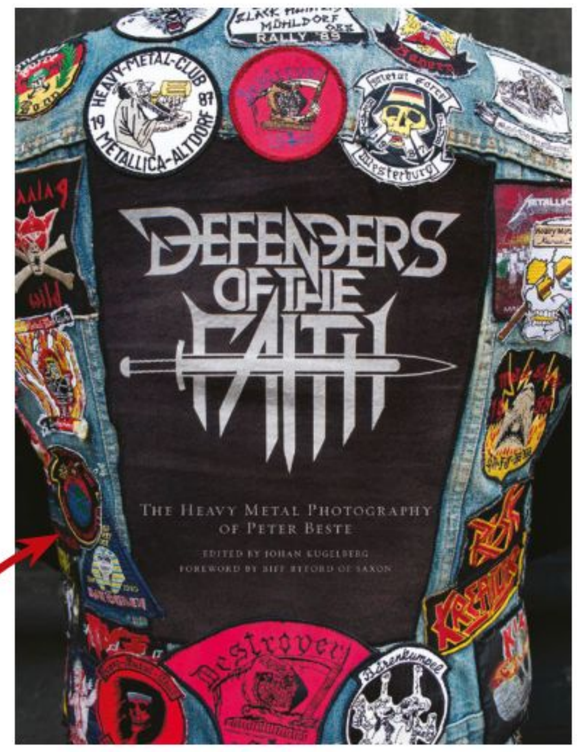
LP VERSION

CD VERSION

UFOMAMMUT
XX BOX SET
SUPERNATURAL CAT
£88-£176

IF YOU'VE EVER had your retinae razed and your cerebral cortex pounded into a state of satori at their live shows, you'll know that Italian psychedelic voyagers Ufomammut are an immense, audio-visual adventure. Now they're celebrating their 20th anniversary in kind with a box set whose gargantuan size looks set to warp reality in its own right. Look beyond the cosmic elephant skull that adorns the box itself and inside you'll find all eight albums to date on either multi-coloured vinyl or CD, along with an exclusive extra disc whose six acoustic reworkings evoke all the vastness of the originals. You'll also find a 64-page book featuring original covers, photos and lyrics to all songs, with an additional poster, back patch and sticker. For the insatiable, there's an optional hoodie or t-shirt to boot. To infinity and beyond!

http://tinyurl.com/ufomammut-box



DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH
£27.50

Peter Beste, the photographer behind the deep visual dive that was the *True Norwegian Black Metal* book, has returned with another intimate tour through our world, focusing on the fans, their vivid battle gear and the sheer joy of communal riff worship.

http://tinyurl.com/beste-faith

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE BOX SETS
£10-£55

The only questionable aspect of Killswitch Engage's return is the decision over which configuration of goodies you're going to get with their new *Atonement* album – choose from signed art prints, t-shirts, bum bags, CDs and gorgeous-looking vinyl.

http://tinyurl.com/kse-boxsets

RICK AND MORTY SURVIVAL RATIONS
£24.99

Call us cynical, but if you want to survive an extinction-level event we reckon you might need more than sweetcorn relish, BBQ seasoning, pickled gherkins and some mysterious 'special' sauce. Still, s'pretty tasty…

http://tinyurl.com/rick-rations

WorldMags.net

PERIPHERY HAIL STAN T-SHIRT

£14.99-£15.99

Funny, when you think about it, that Periphery are so punctilious when it comes to crafting their proggy djent but let this typo creep onto their latest album sleeve and all associated merch. Awks!

http://tinyurl.com/peripher-tee

DOOM COIN

£14.99

If you're into *Doom* the game, doom the music or just fab interstellar diabolist diagrams pressed onto silver coinage, you're quids in with this limited-edition 38mm *Doom* coin (not literally; not legal tender).

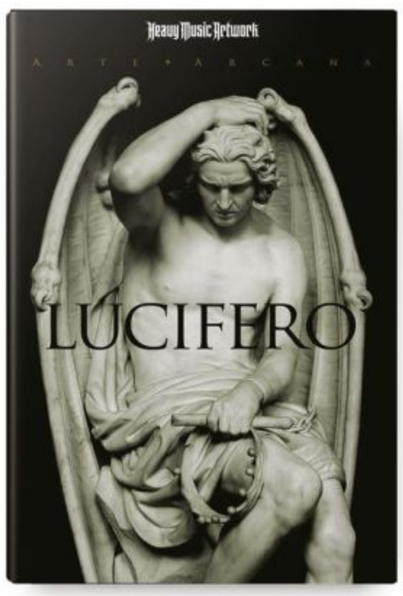
http://tinyurl.com/doom-coin

MAYHEM BEER GLASS

£8.99

Back when Mayhem were first raising bloody hell on the streets of Norway, the teenage transgressors would never have dreamt of decanting their beer bottles into fancy pint pots. Thankfully, the world has moved on.

http://tinyurl.com/mayhem-glass



ARTE ARCANA: LUCIFERO

£45

The 24-hour news cycle not enough of a hellscape for you? Fine – dive into this heavyweight, limited-edition tome that has more Luciferian visions than you can waggle a fiery pitchfork at.

http://tinyurl.com/lucifero-book

GRAND MAGUS T-SHIRT

£16

Wolf? Where? No, wear. Wear a werewolf! Bite the (silver) bullet and show your appreciation for Svensk metallers Grand Magus and their latest hairy, lairy opus by splashing the *Wolf God* artwork across your torso.

http://tinyurl.com/magus-tee

JURASSIC PARK VISITOR CENTRE KIT

£45.99

Fool your friends into thinking you went to the actual Jurassic Park, and that dinosaurs still walk the Earth, with a boxful of authentic accoutrements: tickets, lanyard, map, stickers, postcard, trading cards, safety goggles etc.

http://tinyurl.com/jurassic-kit

HOUSE STARK GAMING CHAIR

£329

It doesn't matter whether you're king of the north or just a bit of a bastard, you've got to love this plush, House Stark-branded excuse to get yer game on. Direwolf not included.

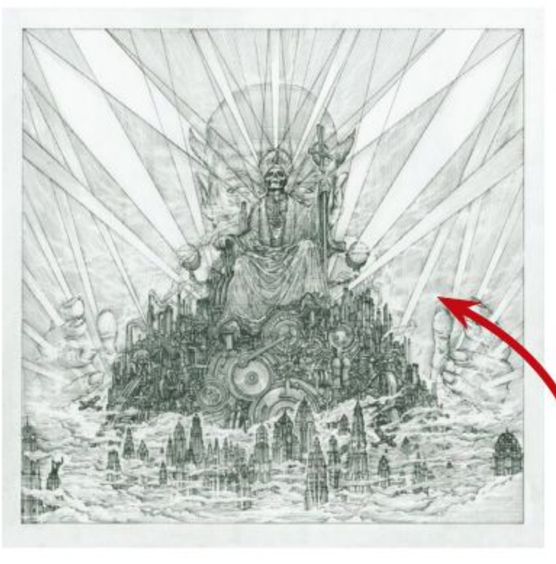
http://tinyurl.com/stark-chair

DEAD SEA T-SHIRT

£19.99-£24.99

We all love skulls, we all love tentacles, but hitherto we could only wear one or the other. So praise be to Outer Vision for beautifully merging the evergreen motifs in faux-faded denim-effect turquoise cotton.

http://tinyurl.com/tenta-skull



GHOST - SPIRIT PRINT

£88

This is your actual art, this: 25 signed prints in tasty metallic graphite and jade by Polish artist-architect Zbigniew M Bielak, depicting Papa Emeritus on a vast mechanical throne conjured within the devil's hands.

http://tinyurl.com/ghost-spiritprint

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BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Thirteen long years after we last heard a new Tool album, the band finally open up about one of the most secretive, hyped and eagerly anticipated records in metal history. What took so long?

WORDS: ELEANOR GOODMAN • PICTURES: TRAVIS SHINN

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Tracking down the new Tool album is like a military operation. We know there will be one, but we don't know when, so we lie in wait looking for a private message in our in-boxes and decoding teasers on social media. One day, we get the signal and are summoned to their record company's plush offices, accessed through an unmarked glass door. We sign a non-disclosure agreement, hand over our phones, and settle into a meeting room that's being monitored by CCTV.

Only then are we permitted to hear the album, at ear-splitting, brain-spinning, heart-shuddering volume – apparently at the band's request. No title or tracklisting are provided. We return three weeks later to hear it again with the extra intel.

Bassist Justin Chancellor is tickled when we tell him about the secrecy, but is grateful to the suits all the same. "Really?!" he chuckles, in a proper, friendly, down-to-earth London way. And then, "The people that work for us are trying to fulfil our best intentions, and not ruin the surprise. You know like when you buy a secretive birthday present for your wife? You hide it in the garage, you wrap it up, and you try not to spill the beans. On the day, you want it to be full impact."

That day is August 30, when all the fans' birthdays will come at once. They will finally be able to hear *Fear Inoculum* – Tool's fifth album, and their first in 13 years. Such is the anticipation, there's a whole subgenre of memes about waiting for it, featuring the likes of *The X-Files*' 'I Want To Believe' slogan and an elderly version of Beavis And Butt-Head. As an old-school band of a certain level, Tool rarely give interviews or post updates, so every quote or scrap of information is dissected at length. There's potential here to make people happy *and* sell a shitload of records.

But there may be other, more serious reasons for the security; Tool have a pool of obsessives who have directed their frustration about the delays at frontman Maynard James Keenan. As the face of the band, they hold him responsible.

"I felt bad for him, and he even told me he was getting death threats from these idiots out there," sighs drummer Danny Carey, whose insane beats are the lynchpin of Tool's distinctive, mesmeric sound. "They just have no idea what our work ethic is. These things don't *happen*, man. There's no other record that's going to sound like this Tool record. What you hear is what you get, and what you get is what it takes to get it done. And it's not an easy process."

Tool (left to right): Danny Carey, Justin Chancellor, Adam Jones, Maynard James Keenan

We're talking to Danny over the phone on a Friday afternoon, as he sits inside Tool's Hollywood rehearsal space, their ground zero, surrounded by his "toys" – modular synthesisers and a mixing console that once belonged to late funk pioneer Rick James.

He moved there during 1989, living in one half and renting the other to local bands. It was here that he ending up jamming with creative misfit Maynard James Keenan, special-effects-artist-turned-guitarist Adam Jones and original bassist Paul D'Armour, stepping up to the plate because they couldn't find a drummer.

Inside, the foursome would spend hours experimenting with their polyrhythmic music, pushing the boundaries of 90s alt-metal and dropping acid together. They wrote 1992's confrontational EP *Opiate* and refined their sound for the following year's debut full-length *Undertow*, which launched them into the mainstream.

We end up speaking to Justin the day after Danny, at his own home studio on the outskirts of LA "in the middle of nowhere". He built the house with his wife, and it's his own personal paradise where he can blast music as loudly as he wants. But when he moved from the UK to LA to replace Paul D'Armour in 1995, as a fresh-faced 25-year-old, he crashed on the practice room floor.

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"I used to wake up in my sleeping bag and hear Danny jamming with his amazing jazz friends," recalls Justin. "I'd walk in and say, 'Hi, I'm Justin!' and then the guys from Tool would show up, and we'd start writing music. It's a pretty intense place for me. We've never let it go and we've written everything there."

For the uninitiated, "everything" means 1996's *Aenima*, a triple-platinum album that explored Jungian psychology. It means 2001's psychedelic *Lateralus*, a deep-dive into sacred geometry that interrogates the notion of what it means to be human and our connection with nature and the divine. It means 2006's *10,000 Days*, a more personal endeavour that paid tribute to Maynard's late mother, Judith Marie, who passed away 10,000 days after a brain aneurysm left her paralysed.

Now converted into a studio, Tool's rehearsal room is a dark, windowless bunker where Justin, Danny and Adam spent three gruelling years writing *Fear Inoculum*. It almost broke them. Many times, they thought about quitting. "I was ready to split up and go, 'Well if you guys can't commit to this, I'm just going to play with other people," Danny says wearily.

They arrived at the space after a turbulent few years. Riffs had been coming out of them during the five-year stint touring *10,000 Days*, but they don't write well on the road. They took a break for a couple of years, doing small runs here and there, during which time Danny and Adam had kids and the band were embroiled in a distracting, thorny, much-publicised multimillion-dollar lawsuit with their insurance company. It wasn't until around 2013/2014 that they were able to properly focus on writing.

"MAYNARD WAS GETTING DEATH THREATS FROM THESE IDIOTS"

DANNY CAREY

For that three-year period, they wrote solidly from 1pm-5pm, Monday to Thursday, recording "crazy jams," before heading home to listen to them and attempting to make the pieces fit. Danny remembers *Pneuma*'s riff, a hooky, six-note progression, as an early breakthrough, along with the sinuous intro to *Invincible*. They scrutinised *everything*, binning whatever failed to meet their dizzingly high standards.

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The band put this down to a democratic approach that means they all have to be happy with the output. If they're not, they can't move on. Guitarist Adam Jones in particular is known as a self-confessed perfectionist who lives by the mantra, 'It's not good when it's done, it's done when it's good.'

For jazz aficionado Danny, content with jamming or improvising and sticking with the results, this is excruciating. "Everything Adam does has to be completely composed, and very thought-out, and he'll take many, many takes to dial it in absolutely perfect," he explains.

Then we hear the smile breaking through in his voice, the 6' 5" drummer coming across like a gentle giant. "But the end result I completely adore, so I believe in his work method, even though it drives me nuts. I hate it! I can't be around when he's doing it, because I just start melting down."

"Sometimes I thought we were nearly there," says Justin, with the air of a man who's been into battle and lived to tell the tale. "We'd written an album or we had some songs that were cool, and then we'd dump the whole lot and start again. It was devastating."

Let that sink in. While fans were glued to their computers and phones, frantically searching for any hint of new music, commenting on Reddit threads and Photoshopping memes, Tool were writing and trashing entire *albums*' worth of material.

Danny eventually half-delivered on his threats, temporarily going off and collaborating with other bands, releasing *Incitare* with American jam band Volto! in 2013, and forming aquatic comedy metal band Legend Of The Seagullmen with Mastodon's Brent Hinds among others. They released their self-titled debut in 2018, its straight-up groove and seafaring lyrics a world away from Tool's intricate compositions.

The band powered through the pain, alternating between writing and playing in the States to pay the bills. Sometimes they didn't believe in the record and were ready to give up. Then they would rethink their approach, dream up new material and become re-energised. "The end of it was amazing," smiles Justin. "It fucking sounds stupid to say, but the last three years of it were really uplifting. Probably the grey hairs in my beard speak for us all!"

It was Justin, down-to-earth and candid, who eventually set a cut-off point and forced them into the studio. In early 2018, they started tracking with returning producer Joe Barresi. "Other people weren't quite ready and I wasn't ready myself, but I thought, 'You know what? We've just got to lean forward right now.' Especially after 12 years, you don't even know if anyone *cares* any more."

Meanwhile, Maynard had been occupying himself. Over in Arizona, he had been tending to his vineyards, harvesting the grapes and turning them into wine at his own Caduceus Cellars. He made multiple albums with side-project Puscifer, most recently 2015's *Money Shot*, and had taken it on tour – complete with a troupe of lucha libre wrestlers. Last year, he and Billy Howerdel teamed up to release *Eat The Elephant* – A Perfect Circle's first record in 14 years.

Though he's Tool's best-known personality and bears the burden of public accountability, he has little to do with the songs until they're approaching their finished form, preferring to leave a distinctive imprint without going back and forth for revisions. "When Maynard commits, he wants to commit to a final product," explains Danny. "He really doesn't like to have to change it after he's committed emotionally to something. I don't blame him for that at all."

He is also notoriously private when it comes to Tool's affairs. Though he's enthused to us about jumpstarting the Arizona wine industry and the sociopolitical themes of A Perfect Circle's recent output, we're not granted an audience with him to chat about *Fear Inoculum*. So it's up to Justin to explain the concept behind the title, the meaning of which suggests vaccinating against your worries.

"It means immunising yourself against the things that make you afraid," confirms Justin. "As you grow

"WE'D WRITE AN ALBUM AND THEN DUMP IT. IT WAS DEVASTATING"

JUSTIN CHANCELLOR

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older, you wanna learn, you wanna change, you wanna evolve, and you don't want to live in fear. The fear of dying, fear of everything. Fear is the mindkiller, you know?"

What have been the biggest fears of Tool's past?

"I can't speak for everybody, but I guess it would be: do you have anything left to give? What's your purpose? When you're getting older, you think about what you have to offer, and what's the point of your life. We are all musicians, and we're not really *good* musicians. But we have this gracious gift that has been bestowed on us, and we don't want to disappoint. So I guess our biggest fear would be, just giving up."

It's strange to hear him being self-deprecating, especially given the reverential atmosphere surrounding the band and their quantifiable success. "I'm not self-deprecating really… I think it's an accident. The chemistry and the alchemy of this band, we're very lucky to have fallen together."

Danny is more direct about the title: it's a message about ignoring those critics who've continuously scrutinised the quartet.

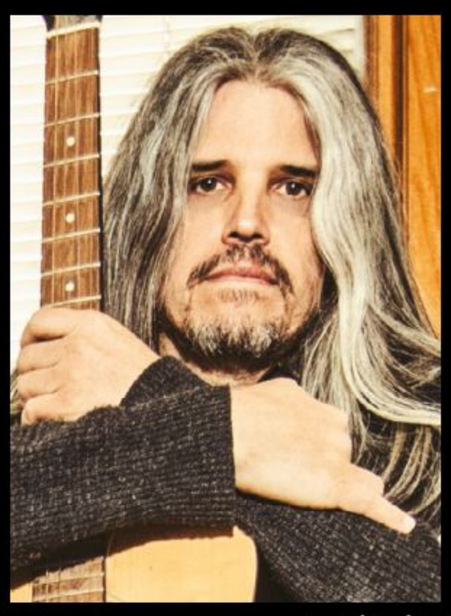
"We were kind of feeling like we were growing into our next level as a band, making progress in the way we composed, and just not giving a shit any more about what anybody thinks. Kind of conquering our fears about critics and whatnot!" he explains. "The *Fear Inoculum* thing was, 'get rid of the fear and don't worry about it', especially after we had taken so long, because we knew we were going to take heat."

On May 1, 2019, Maynard tweeted his own sarcastic meme. It featured an old band picture with a thought bubble coming out of his head, reading: "Feelin Cute. Might play some new material on this upcoming tour. idk." It was

Yes, these are really the promo pics they sent us. Some things never change...

"KIRK HAMMETT HELPED MY PLAYING"

Tool guitarist Adam Jones reveals how he keeps in creative shape



With so many years since Tool's last release, how would you say you've evolved as a guitarist since 2006?

Adam Jones: "That's a good question! I've definitely been practising more than ever. Since the last record came out, when I meet a guitarist I like, I'll ask them what they do to warm up or what do they do to stay good. Most of them show me a technique or a stretch – or maybe a practice idea. The last time I saw Kirk Hammett, I asked and he sent me a video of this forwards/backwards run going up and down the neck of the guitar, and it really helped my playing a lot. Instead of doing something like just trying to learn the lead in *Master Of Puppets*."

You've always taken influence from places outside of the guitar world — art, film, science. Was there anything like that that had an impact on your writing on this record?

"It's honestly all such a blur. I try to be like a sponge and vulnerable, and I try to ask a lot of questions and learn. I also try to look at the world – the keyword being 'try' – in a more forgiving way. When I watch a movie, I pretend I'm 12, because when I was 12 I liked everything. So many people are so jaded about everything and I try to avoid that. I just try to do that with the arts and music in general, and when I hear something, I ask myself what influences came in when someone was creating it and I acknowledge that a player might not be Eddie Van Halen, but they're good and they're good in their own unique way. I try to pick up on that and try to think from my chest instead of from my head."

It's quite funny to hear that a forgiving gaze is the key for you, considering how legendary Tool's perfectionism is

"I don't know if I was the first person to say it, but I always thought it as a kid and I still think: It's not good when it's done, it's done when it's good. That's how we go about what we do."

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Honestly we don't even know whose house this is

accompanied by his recurring hashtag, taking the piss out of nagging fans: #whileyouwerewhiningwewereworking. The internet revved into overdrive.

Four days later, they stood onstage at Jacksonville's Welcome To Rockville festival and aired *Descending* with lyrics for the first time, a black pyramid image looming behind Danny's kit while red and yellow lights pierced the gloom. They debuted *Invincible*, with its multiple false endings. These were rapturous moments for fans, and vulnerable ones for Justin.

"THEN I LOOKED OVER AT MAYNARD AND I JUST FLIPPED HIM OFF"

JUSTIN CHANCELLOR

"It was literally like standing in front of thousands of people without any clothes on, and playing a new song that no one's ever heard before, and trying to pull it off and seeing if it fits in with all your tried and trusted greats," he says, anxiousness creeping into his voice even now. "That was a leap of faith, you know what I mean? And it's not that amazing, I will be self-deprecating again. But you know what *is* amazing, is that there were tons of people having a great time and enjoying it."

A month later, their first European tour in 12 years kicked off at Berlin's Mercedes-Benz Arena on June 2, and *Metal Hammer* were there to see the show – a visual feast featuring screens, trippy projections and eye-frying lasers. For all of Tool's perceived seriousness and mammoth studio sessions, it was obvious the guys were having fun.

During *Invincible*, Justin could be seen doing a little dance – something he brings up today. During the first few minutes, there's no bass part, so he devised a routine where he would start pointing at a different member of the crowd on each drum beat, causing everyone to clap. What happened next is an affectionate glimpse into Tool's dynamic.

"One day during the tour, Maynard's like, 'Excuse me, Jus, can I have a quick word with you?' And I was like, 'Oh no, I'm in trouble.' And he goes, 'Can I ask you a favour? You know in *Invincible*, can you not get the crowd to clap during that part? Because it really throws me off!' The next night, I didn't do the pointing thing, and it was hard for me. I'm like, 'What am I going to do, I'll just stand in the shadows and be quiet.' And guess what? They all clapped

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anyway! They're literally clapping a polyrhythm! And I looked over at him and I just flipped him off."

One of the most striking features of their new production is the giant, seven-pointed, illuminated star suspended from the ceiling. *Fear Inoculum* has a weird relationship with the number seven; there are rhythms where they explore 7/4 or 7/3, and a riff they count in 21, which they count as three rounds of seven.

"Well, one of the songs ended up in seven, just out of the riffs we were coming up with, so it was sort of subliminal, I suppose, at the very infantile stages of writing," explains Danny, who's long been Tool's resident numerology/occult scholar. "But if you go from six to seven, it's more of an insightful progression, just in the number sequence. Anybody could draw a six-sided star, but to draw a seven-sided star, you have to come from a different place."

We're left pondering this seriously cryptic explanation long after the interview ends.

Tool are no longer the same band that innocently gelled in Danny's practice room. They have evolved from the outspoken immediacy of *Opiate*, through philosophy, involved time signatures and increasing track lengths; *Fear Inoculum* is a labyrinthine prog odyssey with a runtime of more than 80 minutes. The songs undulate meditatively, and long instrumental passages wind between MJK's vocals.

Justin pragmatically insists they're "not prog rock, we're not categorisable", but there's no denying these songs take time and effort to digest. In 2019, that's a big ask, especially since Tool aren't on streaming services at the time of going to press, meaning a whole generation of heavy music fans are growing up without them. There's a line on *Invincible* about a '*warrior, struggling to remain relevant*'. We ask Danny whether he's worried about Tool remaining relevant.

"I have a hard time finding *validity* in a lot of things I hear now," he says carefully. "Part of it is that you get old, and I've kind of heard everything!

Ha ha ha! I really didn't know if we were gonna still be accepted, because especially doing this route, we went the opposite way even more, like making a shorter song 10 minutes long, and realising, 'Oh man, is anyone even gonna buy this?' But I think people are starved for a truly alternative band."

The sold-out arenas indicate he's right. So does that continuing secrecy around this most protected of bands. Our interview with Danny is only confirmed on the day, and our time with Justin the day before. The calls are monitored and we're only allowed 30 minutes with each bandmember – barely enough time to scratch the surface of this industrious and life-changing 13-year period. We're not permitted to shoot the band, instead relying on photos they submit to us at the last minute. In short, it's Tool's world and we're just living in it.

Change, or at least more forward motion, might be on the horizon. Danny says *Fear Inoculum* is the final part of a five-album deal, leaving them as "free agents" with more motivation. "My hope is we get in and knock out another record. We have tons of riffs and jams and things. It's not going to take 12 years, or if it does, I'll probably be so old I can't pick up my sticks any more!"

He laughs, but there's gravity to his words; the oldest in the band, he turned 58 this year, and will be 71 if the band undertake another comparable cycle. But that's for future Tool to worry about. What really shines through is the band's gratitude for getting *Fear Inoculum* out. Before we hang up with Justin, he tells us of his plan to toast his achievement, and another interview completed, by unwinding with a celebratory beer.

"It was our living breath, to get this done. It was basically everything that was us, and I'm really proud that we actually stuck with it," he confesses. "And it's a little bit lame, because it's just music. But for us, it's everything we aspire to be. People believe in us. Not many bands get the support from enough people to actually encourage you to go through with it."

"The morale in our band is better than it's been in ages," adds Danny. "I think it's such a relief giving birth to this record, that now we're like happy parents, and we're feeling giddy."

Even if we have to wait anxiously outside the delivery room door until 2032, we've got a hell of a lot of music to enjoy in the meantime.

FEAR INOCULUM WILL BE OUT ON AUGUST 30 VIA MUSIC FOR NATIONS

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GREY MATTER

We get inside the head of renowned artist and longtime Tool collaborator Alex Grey

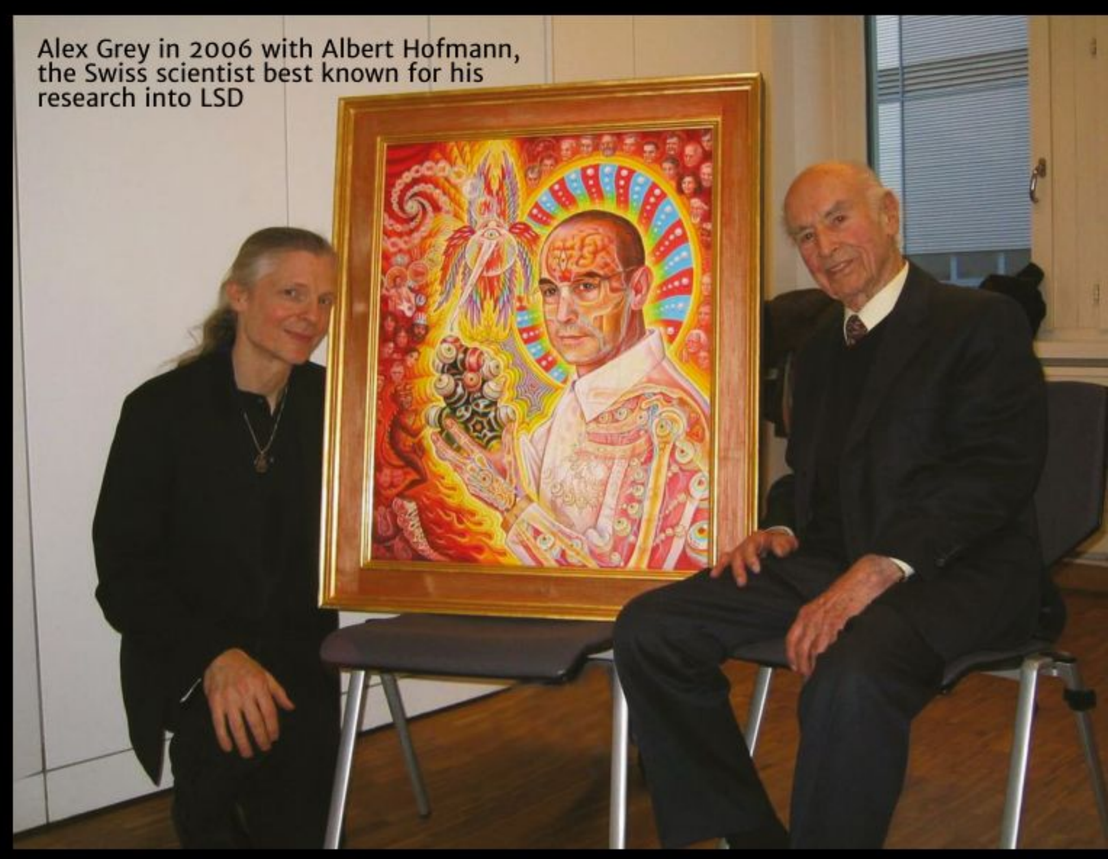
When did you start to discover your own style?
Alex Grey: "In high school when I was 17 years old and found Michelangelo, Dali and Tchelitchew, they opened some kind of doorway to the visionary worlds for me. When I got to the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, my roommate, Richard Moss, introduced me to the work of [German artist] Mati Klarwein, one of the greatest psychedelic visionary painters, beloved by Miles Davis, Santana, Warhol and Jimi Hendrix. That opened me up to the world of the Viennese Fantastic Realists like Ernst Fuchs and then I found H.R. Giger's [1977 book] *Necronomicon*. So by the age of 21, in 1975, I was making visionary paintings based on psychedelic experiences."

How did your time at Harvard Medical School inform your work?
"I photographed some remarkable teratological [abnormally physically developed] specimens in the anatomical museum there and spent some time in the basement in a morgue, literally the underworld, preparing bodies for anatomy class. It imbued a profound respect around the subject of mortality and a lifelong fascination with the beauty and sacredness of the body at every level of cell, organ, fibre, and sinew. How consciousness resides in each of our bodies is a profound mystery, as is the passing away of that connection with the body. Buddha said the greatest teacher is Death. Death should shake us into realising the precious temporariness of our time on Earth."

When did you first try psychedelics, what was it like, and how did it impact your art?
"I was a 21-year-old, deeply depressed atheist performance artist. Waking up in the morning on the last day of art school, I dared God to show me a reason not to kill myself. Later that afternoon I was saying goodbye to my art professor, and a classmate, Allyson, drove by and invited us to her end-of-the-year art school party happening that night. On Allyson's couch, I had my first LSD journey on May 30, 1975. Behind closed eyes, I was spiralling through an inner tunnel of awareness, a 'rebirth canal'. I was in the dark, going toward the light. The light was infinite love and divine wisdom, it felt like God was revealed through a visionary symbol. The Polar Unity Spiral [Alex's name for this curling space going from black to white] showed me that the opposites were connected by all the shades of grey. Grey brought the opposites together, and that was what I wanted to do with my art. So, I decided to change my name. Allyson knew the experience of God contact. We fell in love and have been together ever since that night."

Why do you think the flaming eye is so important to Tool fans?
"It is a symbol developed in my work since the 1980s as a symbol of heightened consciousness. In the *Lateralus* album, I used the flaming eye at the creative power centres of the hand, heart, throat and third eye of the singing anatomical figure. Adam seemed to recognise the logo-like quality and utility of the symbol. Soon enough, fans sent pictures of some amazing flaming eye tattoos on every part of the body."

What's the most challenging commission that you've done?
"The Net of Being was a painting based on an ayahuasca vision in 2002. I had been working on it for years when Adam saw it and wanted to use it for *10,000 Days*. This painting was not a commission, but it was probably my most challenging vision to realise."



Alex Grey in 2006 with Albert Hofmann, the Swiss scientist best known for his research into LSD

What's the latest news on your art space, the Chapel Of Sacred Mirrors?
"Chapel of Sacred Mirrors, CoSM, was co-founded with my beloved artist wife, Allyson. CoSM became a non-profit in 1996 and an Art Church in 2008, a place for community to explore creativity as a spiritual practice. CoSM is now building Entheon, a 12,000-square-foot, three-storey Sanctuary of Visionary Art. Inside Entheon there will be a Tool Shrine."

SEE MORE AT WWW.ALEXGREY.COM, BUILDENTHEON.COM AND COSM.ORG

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KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

Wild at Heart

If you go down to the woods today… you might find Jesse Leach. We spent a day with the Killswitch Engage frontman, who's swapped city life for vision quests. Wait, what?

WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY • PICTURES: JUSTIN BORUCKI

Jesse, front and centre with Killswitch Engage

Jesse Leach was hiking a trail through the forests around his home in upstate New York a while ago when he came across a pair of black bear cubs. For anyone whose hot take on the natural world comes courtesy of a David Attenborough documentary, this would have been a magical moment: beautiful creatures in their native habitat, unspoiled by the intrusion of anything approaching modern civilisation.

Except the Killswitch Engage singer knew this wasn't quite as cute as it looked. Because wherever there are baby bears, a mama bear won't be too far away, and she will protect her offspring by any means necessary.

Twenty-six people have been killed by bears in the US since 2010, and Jesse didn't want to become the 27th. So he did what anyone who watches as many survival documentaries as he does would do: he got the hell out of there as fast as he could.

"I knew the mom would be close, and I figured she would smell me and that would be game over," he says. "So I started doing this death metal growl and banging trees, and I just ran."

It's a great story: fragile humanity acknowledging the fearsome power of nature in all its red-in-tooth-and-claw glory. At least it would be, if we weren't at this very moment walking through those one of the very same forests where he bumped into the bears. Suddenly that indistinct brownish shape through the foliage just over there takes on a sinister hue. Is it a bush, or is it a giant, pissed-off Paddington?

"We'll be fine," reassures Jesse. "You just have to be watchful." He hands over a can of bug spray. "You should put this on. If you get bitten by a tick, you could end up with Lyme disease, which can be nasty. Like *very* nasty."

Great. If the bears don't get you, the insects will.

To get to the place Jesse Leach calls home these days, you drive north out of New York City for two hours until you reach the Catskill Mountains, then just follow the road upwards until civilisation is a distant memory. He lives a few miles away from Woodstock, the tiny town-turned-hippy mecca that lent its name to the 60s festival (an event that actually took place an hour-and-a-half's drive away).

"Some people in Woodstock came for the festival and never left," he says. "One guy walks around with no shoes all year. But there's a great community of artists and musicians. I was sitting in a bar and I saw the guitarist from Bad Brains. And next to him was a guy who used to be in [70s funk collective] P-Funk. They had this reggae band, and they asked me to jam with them."

His one-storey house stands on a quiet road surrounded by greenery and the kind of fresh air they should bottle up and sell in the Big Apple for 10 bucks a pop. He's been coming here on holiday for 11 or 12 years between tours, but he moved in for good in January. He figured he spent so much time and money visiting that he may as well just move here and rent a place full-time.

"I STARTED DOING THIS DEATH METAL GROWL AND BANGING TREES, AND I JUST RAN"
JESSE LEACH

There was another reason, too. Just before Xmas, Jesse's 18-year marriage broke down. He doesn't want to divulge details, but he does admit that it was messy. "We were supposed to move here together, but I ended up coming on my own. It was rough for the first couple of weeks. Full-on mental breakdown on the living room floor, drinking myself stupid." He laughs. "Living the cliché."

Today, his new girlfriend, Purple, is here. They've been together for five months but they seem like a perfect fit. They've only just got back from an EDM festival in Michigan, where they "took psychedelics for pretty much a week". It turns out that today is Jesse's 41st birthday, and Purple is heading out to pick up his birthday presents. She has a look in her eye that suggests she knows exactly what she wants to get him.

But we're not here to talk about Jesse's domestic situation or what he's going to get for his birthday. We're here to hike, to brave everything Mother Nature can throw at us and hopefully not get mauled, poisoned or eaten in the process.

Ten minutes later, we've parked the car and are deep in a forest, following Jesse as he leads us along a trail between trees and rocks. We talk as we walk, our voices and the crunch of our feet the only noises breaking the silence.

With his bushy beard and sinewy physique (he says he's dropped 30lbs after going vegan, cutting out gluten and reducing his booze intake, and it shows) the singer looks like an

Jesse Leach: no day-tripper

PICTURE: CREDIT

authentic woodsman. Or at least he does from the eyebrows down: the effect is ruined by the freshly dyed mohawk crawling across his head like an electric blue caterpillar.

The difference between him and most other hikers is mainly psychedelic. Over the last few years, he's become an avid proponent of microdosing LSD and magic mushrooms. Microdosing – taking a reduced amount of a drug that would otherwise blitz your soufflé – is an on-trend pursuit that advocates say helps you deal with anxiety issues while getting you nicely buzzed.

"I got into it when someone I knew who was a chemist made a batch of LSD specifically for it. You just stop worrying about stuff. Sometimes if I'm going out to a show, I'll do it rather than drink."

In fairness, the doses aren't always so micro. "Oh no," he says with a grin. "The last time I was here, I was on copious amounts of mushrooms."

So far, so Woodstock. But his adventures in psychedelia are anchored in a more serious worldview. A strong streak of spirituality runs through him: he meditates, practises yoga and communes with nature. And fairly regularly he undertakes vision quests.

"It's a Native American practice where you go out into the wilderness, take psychedelics and find your spirit animal," he explains. "And the spirit animal will communicate with you."

The first time he did it, he says, he fasted for a full day, ate a handful of magic mushrooms and sat on top of a mountain. "I stayed there all day," he says. "These red-tailed hawks were flying above me, and I could see in their eyes and they could see in mine. They were calling. I got messages."

That sounds kind of crazy.

"Sure. You can say what you want about it, but I firmly believe I was given messages through my spirit animal, and it helped heal and guide me and protect me. I still believe in it."

He indicates his chest. Visible through the V of his denim shirt is a tattoo of a red-tailed hawk.

Jesse fell in love with the outdoors as a kid. He and his brother would go hiking with their father in the White Mountains, near their home in New Hampshire. It was a rare moment of bonding with his dad, a minister and purveyor of a fire-and-brimstone strain of evangelical Christianity. So strong was Leach Sr's devotion, he moved the family from town to town whenever he heard God's voice telling him to do so.

The pair spent years butting heads. Jesse hated his father's ingrained bigotry. "He was such a tyrant," he says. "I kept saying to him, 'You talk ▶

“MY DAD SURVIVED CANCER TWICE, AND MORTALITY MADE HIM CHANGE HIS WAYS”

JESSE LEACH

about the God of love, yet here you are looking on in judgement.'"

In recent years, they've become closer. "He survived cancer twice, and mortality made him change his ways. He retired from the ministry and became a professor. He's still religious, but it morphed his faith away from the dogma of religion about sexuality and gender. Now we're decent friends."

We've taken a break from our hike and are perched on a rock above a small gorge. I suggest talking about the fine new KSE album, *Atonement*. He shrugs and says, "Mehhhh." It's not because he's not proud of it – "I am *so* happy with this record" – but he'd rather let the music and lyrics speak for themselves. It's just about the only clichéd thing that comes out of his mouth today.

But *Atonement* is significant for another reason. While Killswitch were making it, Jesse discovered a polyp on his vocal fold. "When they told me, I've never seen my doctor have that look on his face before," he says.

He was referred to a surgeon – "the guy who did Adele's vocal surgery a few years ago" – who compared Jesse's voice to "an 80-year-old man's forehead".

"I was sitting there going, 'Is it over? Is it fucking done?'" he says. The band were forced to cancel one tour of their own, but they were due to go out on a huge European tour with Iron Maiden, and there was no way they could blow that one out. "I fell into a pretty dark depression prior to the surgery," he says. "There was fear, anxiety and self-hate… feeling like I'd fucked things up for the band, that it was somehow my fault."

Thankfully, the operation went well, despite the surgeon finding a second polyp on his throat. He visited a vocal coach as part of his recovery, where he found he could do things with his voice he never could before. He's starting to tell me about the Maiden tour when his phone buzzes. He looks at the screen and the colour drains from his face.

"This is so weird," he says. "My doctor just called, the guy I was telling you about. Dr Kessler."

Do you want to call him back?

"No, I don't want to talk to him right now. It's freaking me out. This is weird."

He puts the phone down, then picks it up again. His colour returns. "Oh, he's wishing me happy birthday." He laughs with relief. "Jesus Christ."

We've walked for what seems like a week, though in reality it's probably not even an hour. Normally, Jesse would spend entire days out here, communing with nature and what he calls 'The Great Spirit'.

"I like to refer to the Great Spirit when I say my prayers," he says as we begin to walk back towards the car. "Mother Earth. Though to me it's not a male or a female thing. It's a spiritual entity that I believe exists in all things. I'm comfortable with the idea of this greater force, this greater energy that surrounds us and not having to label it."

He's aware of how it might sound, though he doesn't really care. "It's a fine line I try to walk where I take what I do seriously, but I try not to take myself that seriously," he says. "My intention is to spread this message of love and unity and self-empowerment, but in the same breath I'm onstage with four other guys who are much more light-hearted about it."

He says it was tough to reconcile those two approaches when he first rejoined Killswitch Engage in 2012. "I had a really hard time with it. I was miserable. I'd be onstage trying to talk about, you know, society, and Adam would be, 'Titties and beers!' I'm, like, 'Come on, this is deep shit.' I'd get offstage and have the weight of the world on my shoulders. But I think I realised I had to be humble. I can laugh at Adam's dick jokes now."

"I DID MAGIC MUSHROOMS AND GOT MESSAGES THROUGH RED-TAILED HAWKS"

JESSE LEACH

We're back at the car. He's heading back to his house, where his girlfriend will give him the present she's just been out to pick up: a beautiful, handcrafted wooden table. Later tonight, they'll get dressed up and head out to a nearby restaurant. He says that up here people have no idea who he is or what he does, and he doesn't volunteer the information unless asked. "And even then, I'll say the name of the band and people are just, like, [shrugging], 'I don't know.' And I'm, like, 'Yes!'"

We drop him off, and bid Jesse, his girlfriend and his new handcrafted wooden table farewell, leaving him to his solitude. And the ticks and bears.

It's taken a while, but Jesse has found inner peace

Mates By Design

No rivalries here: Jesse and Howard have created one of metal's great bromances

Atonement features an unlikely guest star: former KSE singer Howard Jones. The man who replaced Jesse in 2002 before himself being replaced by the returning Jesse in 2012 appears on the track *The Signal Fire*.

"It was kind of perfect," says Jesse of the collaboration. "It was around the time I was needing surgery on my throat, so I called him, he turned up the next day and nailed it in a couple of hours."

The pair had been acquaintances since before Killswitch, but Jesse says the media kept pitting them against each other, giving them both "weird feelings" about it. Then they met up.

"I vented to him about being compared to each other: 'I could never match up to your voice.' And then he was like, 'Fuck you, man, when *Alive Or Just Breathing* came out, I had to sing those lyrics, and that's a completely different style, I could never write them.' We started hugging."

Metal's most endearing bromance was sealed in August 2018, when Howard, in town to do press for Light The Torch, joined his ex-bandmates onstage at London's O2 Arena.

"That wasn't even planned," says Jesse. "I put my arm around him and go, 'You know you gotta come out and do *The End Of Heartache*.' He's like, (half a second pause), 'OK.' It was a nice way to show anybody who gives a fuck that even though there was no beef, it was squashed anyway."

***ATONEMENT* IS OUT AUGUST 16 VIA MUSIC FOR NATIONS. KILLSWITCH ENGAGE TOUR THE UK IN OCTOBER – TURN TO P.109 FOR DATES**

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VOLBEAT

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HIS NAME IS MICHAEL POULSEN

He's Volbeat's enigmatic frontman. But he's also a devoted father, relentless workaholic and a man starting to face up to his own, inescapable mortality

WORDS: RICH CHAMBERLAIN

Volbeat (left to right): Jon Larsen, Rob Caggiano, Michael Poulsen, Kaspar Boye Larsen

“MY FATHER LIVED ON THE STREETS FOR A WHILE AND I WAS BROUGHT UP NOT TO MOAN”

MICHAEL POULSEN

PRESS/ROSS HALFIN

Having your first child is undoubtedly right up at the top of the list of massive, life-changing, shit-your-pants-scary experiences. Imagine, though, that said seismic event clashed with a monumentally massive date in your professional calendar. Like, oh I don't know… a fucking tour with *Metallica*.

That's the situation that faced Michael Poulsen, Volbeat's unshakable leader, back in 2017. Thankfully, his partner's due date meant that the Danish psychobilly rockers would have enough time to wrap up opening duties for all of 'Tallica's US run. Unfortunately, the memo didn't reach Michael's unborn offspring.

"It ended up that my girlfriend gave birth two months before she was supposed to, so I was still on tour," he says, picking up the story with a sense of astonishment in his voice even two years on. "I was in New York. It was late, I was already in bed at the hotel and she called saying her waters had broken. There was nothing I could do. I got up because I couldn't sleep and I went to the gym. I got a phone call from my girlfriend on FaceTime and she said, 'Now you're a daddy'. I almost fell off the treadmill! I was like, 'What the fuck?!'"

With two months of shows left and a brand new baby girl named Ea Abigail waiting at home, the choices were: A. Get fatherhood off to a pretty darn shaky start by seeing out the tour and meeting Poulsen Jnr aged eight weeks, or B: Sack off dates with the biggest band on the planet. Proving himself to be absolutely batshit crazy, Michael hatched plan C.

"I flew home to Denmark that day so we had to cancel a show with Metallica," he explains. "The day after, I flew back to America and to the tour. When I arrived at the airport a car picked me up to go to the arena. I got to the arena with 15 minutes until stage time. Talk about crazy jetlag!"

This story illustrates the things that characterise Michael – his ridiculous work ethic and his unwavering commitment to family. Our chat was originally meant to take place in his small hometown of Næstved in Denmark, but he cancelled due to a childcare issue, so we're chatting on the phone.

Growing up around 40 miles from Copenhagen in the somewhat sleepy town of Ringsted, Michael's father Jørn quickly instilled in his son the importance of hard work and a tight-knit home life. Michael says that his ▶

father, who remained a staunch supporter of Volbeat until his passing in 2008, fled from an unhappy home when he was just 14 years old. Unsurprisingly, Jørn's survival skills and attitude of doing whatever it took transferred into his parenting style when Michael and his twin sister were born in 1975.

"He came up a tough way," Michael says, speaking of his father with warmth. "He came from parents who were drinking and fighting, and he decided he wasn't going to have that lifestyle, so he lived on the streets for a while. I was brought up not to moan about anything; you should enjoy life, figure out what you want to do and then do it. When my father heard I wanted to get into music, he accepted that but said I had to do it 100% and not listen to what anyone else said. He said I needed to get up three or four hours earlier than everyone else to be ahead of them."

He may have picked up his dad's driven attitude when it came to powering Volbeat, but that doesn't mean Michael has seen his band's triumphant rise from tiny clubs to packed arenas as a quest for perfection. Songs like *Rewind The Exit* and *Die To Live*, both from new album *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*, reference that such a goal might just be an utter waste of time. This inkling is confirmed for *Metal Hammer* as soon as we utter that word: 'perfection'.

"I don't believe in perfection," Michael interjects. "I think that's a terrible word made up by a terrible human being. It's terrible because kids are striving for perfection that just isn't there. If you reach perfection, what do you do afterwards? You climb to the top of the mountain and then what? You climb back down and climb up again? The top of the mountain doesn't exist. I don't try to find perfection when I'm in the studio. If you end up with 500 takes of something you're shooting the spirit of the song and you end up with something dead and fabricated. I want a soul to my music. Perfection? I'll never go there."

Perfection may be a metaphorical destination that Michael has zero interest in, but one actual place that he was keen to reach once Volbeat took off was the familiar surroundings of home. After moving to the relative bright lights of Copenhagen at the age of 17, he has now switched to Næstved, just 15 minutes or so from his childhood house.

"I'm more of a countryside person," he explains with a half laugh. "I moved to Copenhagen because all the great record stores were there! When I came home from touring, the last thing I wanted to see was a big city. My childhood was in a small city, I have a lot of great memories and they are experiences I want to pass onto my daughter. Having a child makes me feel like I can go through my childhood again. I've gone back to where I grew up, it's wonderful."

This is a man who's nailing the work/life balance

"PERFECTION IS A TERRIBLE WORD MADE UP BY A TERRIBLE HUMAN BEING"

MICHAEL POULSEN

It seems that familiarity and fatherhood are two of the drivers of *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*. The album, the band's seventh, cranks their rock'n'roll influence up a notch by further embracing heroes of the '50s. *Die To Live* (featuring Clutch's Neil Fallon) shows this perfectly, thanks to its Jerry Lee Lewis-inspired piano line and Little Richard-esque sax section. The entire record brims with a sense of fun as early rock'n'roll smashes head-on with Volbeat's darker modern metal edge. We put it to ▶

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Now he's a father, Michael is living a second childhood. We're not entirely sure we've ever left our first...

Michael that it's surely no coincidence that his first record since becoming a father features the sounds that filled his own childhood home.

"Those childhood influences are absolutely more in your face on this album," he says. "When you have kids, you remember stuff from your own childhood that you hadn't thought about for a long time. This helps the music become honest and emotional.

"I REMEMBER PLAYING IN A HUGE FOREST WHERE WE COULD BE OUTLAWS"

MICHAEL POULSEN

This material would not have been written if I was not a father. But at the same time, there's a lot of typical Volbeat in there; that is just in my DNA. I don't need a child to tell me how to write like that. It's a great combination of the two."

The theme of harking back to childhood runs through the heart of the record. Michael suggests thumbing through the album's lyrics will allow fans to "go on their own rollercoaster trip back through their childhood". It's a point overtly displayed on the handily named *When We Were Kids*.

"On the cover for that song, it has three kids in the woods playing in this hourglass. They think it's sand or snow running through the hourglass. What they don't know is they're playing with their own time and they're getting older. There's something scary and beautiful about that. I remember being that kid playing in this huge forest; nobody ever went there, we could be outlaws there. In the distance you'd hear your mom screaming, 'Dinner!' You'd go eat something fast so you could get back to this huge forest.

"As kids, we thought we were immortal and nothing could stop us, there's something great about that innocence. If I go back to that big forest now, it was never a forest, it was four trees by a small road!"

In acknowledging the notion of immortality as a folly of youth, Michael is touching on the enhanced focus on mortality that adulthood, and particularly parenthood, brings. It delivers with it the suggestion that the themes of our conversation – hard work and a strong family – could be a paradox for a touring musician. Luckily, the band are now in a position to fly home on days off, or bring their partners and children on tour with them.

"Even though you can see your band growing from club shows to stadiums, you're very proud of that, but being away from home leaves some scars and it really has to be worth it," he says. "We're not getting any younger, and suddenly our parents and family members will all be gone one day, and you've just been touring all around the world. We take more time now to get home."

Michael Poulsen; a family man who just happens to front one of Europe's finest rock bands. And we bet he has a shitload of air miles to show for it.

***REWIND, REPLAY, REBOUND* IS OUT NOW VIA VERTIGO. VOLBEAT TOUR THE UK THIS AUTUMN** **– SEE P.109**

THE BEAT GOES ON...

Volbeat bloody love a guest star. Michael explains why he enlisted some famous pals for *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*

NEIL FALLON (*DIE TO LIVE*)
"Clutch are great guys and they're so unique. When I wrote *Die To Live*, I sent the track to Neil, and told him that I would really love to have him on it. When he heard the JD McPherson Band were also going to be part of it, he was so excited. *Die To Live* is an old-school, in-your-face rock'n'roll song."

GARY HOLT (*CHEAPSIDE SLOGGERS*)
"Rob [Caggiano, guitars] was in Nashville recording the gospel choir. We didn't want to disturb him, so we brought in another guitar player. We were saying, 'What'd be really cool for this Black Sabbath kind of track would be to get Gary Holt.' We're huge fans of Exodus and Slayer. He nailed that solo."

HARLEM GOSPEL CHOIR (*LAST DAY UNDER THE SUN, MAYBE I BELIEVE, UNDER THE INFLUENCE*)
"We worked with them on the last record, and they're on three songs on this one. I always wanted to do this kind of thing, but those arrangements only work on certain songs. It has nothing to do with religion; I write the lyrics and there's not one hint about religion."

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Down For Life at the final show of Wacken Metal Battle Indonesia 2019

SECRET GIGS! SNAKE SOUP! VOLCANOS!

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DOWN FOR LIFE AT W.O.A. METAL BATTLE INDONESIA 2019: PRESS.

We spent a week in Indonesia to delve inside the world's most insane metal scene. From going sightseeing with Burgerkill to attending hidden grindcore shows, it was wild

WORDS: DOM LAWSON

"Welcome back to Bandung!" With a huge grin and arms open for a hug, Burgerkill guitarist Ebenz welcomes *Metal Hammer* back to the heart of the Indonesian metal scene. Nearly a decade since Ebenz first made contact with us, Burgerkill and their countless friends and fellow musicians are still firmly dedicated to telling the rest of the world about their unique community and the huge amounts of great music it produces, often against the logistical odds.

Much to our delight, we have been invited to spend a week at the heart of the scene in Bandung, taking in the third annual Wacken Metal Battle Indonesia along the way. With 10 bands competing for a slot on this year's Wacken bill, it promises an intriguing snapshot of the Indonesian scene in 2019. There is also talk of visiting a volcano. We are very much up for this.

DAY ONE

After (more or less) recovering from the mammoth journey from the UK to the world's fourth most populous country, we launch into our first full day in 30° temperatures and t-shirt-ruining humidity by catching up with Ebenz and Burgerkill. The undisputed number one metal band in Indonesia, Ebenz's crew enjoyed widespread acclaim for 2018's *Adamantine* album and have been working and performing relentlessly since its release, including a brief dash to Europe where they recorded a new six-track EP with a full orchestra, revisiting old songs in a bombastic new style. Entitled *Killchestra*, it's expected to emerge later this year, but Ebenz is thinking ahead to what happens next. Having led his band to several notable triumphs, from winning a *Metal Hammer* Golden God in 2013 to performing at Bloodstock and Wacken in 2015, he's conscious of the responsibility he bears for sustaining an entire scene's hopes.

"We are constantly thinking about what the next big idea will be," he nods. "Obviously I want Burgerkill to be successful, but it's about the whole scene too, showing that we *can* achieve things and get international recognition. We have so much talent here, you know?"

As if to prove his point, we spend the rest of the day at a Burgerkill fan club gathering in the centre of Bandung, watching documentary footage of the band's adventures in Europe and a recent summer camp-cum-festival held for the band's fans, the Begundal. Supported by a loyal and dedicated network of bands, fans and friends, the Indonesian metal scene is clearly becoming more focused and better organised with every passing year.

Meanwhile, Burgerkill will celebrate their 25th anniversary in 2020. When they formed, back in the pre-internet days when metal was a comparatively unfamiliar genre to most Indonesian ears, Ebenz and his friends were homeless, sleeping on the streets of their Ujungberung suburb, poring over dusty, second-hand copies of European metal mags found in local bookstores and wistfully imagining a full-blown heavy metal scene of their own.

"We've definitely come a long way," Ebenz notes, with a shrug. "The big change is that bands from Indonesia can dream a bit bigger now. Maybe anything is possible."

DAY TWO

This year's Wacken Metal Battle Indonesia is taking place an hour's drive outside Bandung, in a purpose-built outdoor venue, overlooked by an elegant, imposing mosque. Obtaining permits for live shows is just one of the ongoing logistical challenges faced by metal bands in Indonesia, exorbitant costs and an omnipresent whiff of corruption ensuring that every gig that *does* take place has been organised meticulously under the constant threat of cancellation. Thankfully, everything seems to be going smoothly, even if it is hot enough to boil an Englishman in his own brain fluid.

We gather at a hotel to meet the bands that will be performing tomorrow. From death metal diehards Carnivored, Hellcrust and Kaluman through to hardcore mob Taring, psychedelic alt-metallers Katzenmeister and atmospheric metalcore crew Kapital, this year's line-up is laudably diverse. As Ebenz reaffirms, it's impossible to quantify what this opportunity means to every last one of these musicians, some of whom have had to travel 500 ▶

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Our Dom (second from right) at the Bandung Metal Affair discussion

Kaluman tear it up at the Wacken Metal Battle

miles to get here, continually impeded by Indonesia's challenging topography and frankly insane levels of traffic.

"There are bands from here in West Java, but also bands from Sumatra and Borneo," he states. "Paint In Black are from Lampung, Sumatra, and they drove 12 hours to be here. That's just the way it is. Welcome to Indonesia! Ha ha!"

DAY THREE

For all the challenges they face, the Indonesians have definitely got their shit together when it comes to putting on a metal show. Wacken Metal Battle Indonesia 2019 proves to be a flawless, professional operation: remarkably, for any festival *anywhere*, all 10 bands hit the stage on schedule and are blessed with excellent front-of-house sound.

Crowds in Indonesia would probably be a lot rowdier if it was legal to drink alcohol at events like this, but even at 11am there are hundreds arriving, most sporting merch from homegrown bands. The first couple of bands suffer a little from playing so early, but the atmosphere and intensity of the fans' enthusiasm rapidly builds up steam. By the time Bandung metallic hardcore brutes Taring hit the stage, the venue is almost consumed by a giant circle pit. Want more proof that heavy music is an international language? Here it is.

"WE'RE CONSTANTLY THINKING ABOUT OUR NEXT BIG IDEA"

EBENZ, BURGERKILL

The standard is amazingly high. From Over Power's thrilling grindcore-with-added-Sabbath to Belantara's incendiary crusty sludgecore, any notion that metal from this part of the world is lagging behind the West is obliterated. To our ears, the most spine-tingling moment comes when metalcore crew Kapital deftly incorporate the sape, a traditional Indonesian instrument, into their thunderous anthems. There's something deliciously alien about this sound, as it collides with the familiar squall of ultra-modern, brutal riffing.

Burgerkill get grilled. (Geddit? Burgers... grilled...? Not sorry)

As night falls, the battle comes to an end. A jury of local metal luminaries, and one slightly confused Dutch booking agent, decree that Taring are the band of the day, not least due to the absolute chaos that erupted during their set. For *Hammer*'s money, they were definitely the one band that seemed wholly ready to take on a field full of drunk Germans at 2am. Justice has been done. Congratulations, chaps!

DAY FOUR

A posse has gathered at Ebenz's house. We're off to see a volcano. Among our crew are Addy, frontman with local metal veterans Forgotten, and his wife Karin, one of a core group of organisers behind all the major metal events in Bandung. They speed off on dirt bikes while we opt for a slightly less terrifying ride into the mountains in Ebenz's car. Several hours of mind-bending ups and downs and heart-stopping close calls with other vehicles later, we arrive at the top of Tangkuban Perahu. The locals start putting on hoodies because the temperature up here is... well, it's still pretty fucking warm by UK standards, but we'll let it slide because the view across the volcano's vast, steaming crater is spectacular. Ebenz and Addy grin at our stunned reactions. Indonesia is an extraordinary place, with dozens of *live* volcanoes, the legendary Krakatoa included. Earthquakes and tsunamis are a more real and present danger here than virtually anywhere in the world. The fearsome power of Mother Nature is all around us. It's pretty fucking metal.

After another trundle through the mountains, we return to Bandung for a celebratory Korean feast courtesy of Wacken Metal Battle winners Taring. With a slot at Wacken confirmed, you would struggle to find a happier group of musicians on the planet right now. Think on, entitled European folk!

DAY FIVE

Today's a big day for metal in Indonesia. Thanks to tireless community efforts spearheaded by local media guru, author and ex-Burgerkill member Kimung, the local culture museum, Museum Kota Bandung, has awarded the metal scene a permanent exhibition documenting its history. Today, we celebrate its opening. The walls are adorned with candid photos of Burgerkill, Indonesian death metal legends Jasad and Wacken Metal Battle winners Beside (2017) and Down For Life (2018) taken during their European exploits.

A vast array of artefacts is on display, ranging from fanzines from the scene's very early days through to more recent

BANDUNG METAL AFFAIR: PRESS/ASEP BUDIMAN. BURGERKILL HALAL: PRESS.

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KALUMAN AT W.O.A. METAL BATTLE INDONESIA 2019: PRESS. BURGERKILL HALAL: PRESS.

academic works dedicated to the birth and evolution of heavy music in Indonesia. Throw in a performance from local unplugged punk rockers Karinding Keos, who play rowdy songs using only traditional instruments and percussion, and this is the ultimate experience for Indonesian metal nerds.

As part of this event, *Metal Hammer* takes part in a discussion about the future of the Indonesian metal scene, how best to engage with the wider metal world and, perhaps most importantly, how Indonesian bands can create a reliable infrastructure for touring bands, both native and foreign. In truth, there are no easy answers to these questions, but the fact that Ebenz and his friends are so passionate about networking with people from around the world says a lot about their prospects.

The rest of the day is dedicated to Extreme Moshpit TV, Ebenz's ongoing YouTube channel. *Hammer* takes part in a genuinely incomprehensible segment wherein Ebenz endeavours to interview us in English, while his friends interrupt in Indonesian. No one is entirely sure what's going on, but we end up pissing ourselves laughing. Taring drummer Gebeg plays Helloween's *Future World* on guitar and gets the words wrong. It's hilarious. Maybe you had to be there.

DAY SIX

Today, we're heading back into the mountains to a secret location. Off the authority's radar and hidden away from the road, you won't find Klub Racun on any maps, online or otherwise. Housed in a sturdy but primitive shed, hidden under a giant canvas medical tent, this is the DIY venue to end them all. Thanks to a pact with the neighbours involving a 5pm sonic curfew, local punk and metal bands are able to put gigs on here regularly, without the need for the usual arduous pursuit of an official permit. It's ridiculously sweaty inside the venue. A sign on the wall reads: 'Welcome under the radar – Here there are: No Sexists, No Homophobes, No Racists, No Xenophobes, No Fascists.' As brutecore quartet Konfliktion and grindcore upstarts InHell tear through brief but

"BANDS FROM INDONESIA CAN DREAM A BIT BIGGER NOW"

EBENZ, BURGERKILL

Burgerkill: beloved local heroes, fighting for recognition for their scene

exhilarating sets, with condensation dripping from the ceiling throughout, it's hard not to conclude that this is one of the coolest things we have ever seen. The metal scenes in Europe and the US are cool enough, of course, but are they secret-grindcore-show-in-the-mountains cool? No. Definitely not.

After a final and surprisingly delicious meal of freshly made snake soup (no, really!), it's time to say goodbye to the world's friendliest and most passionate metal scene. We'll all be hearing a lot more from them.

"We think we've got something special here and we just want the world to hear about it," Ebenz concludes as we depart. "We're like a big family here. And *metal* is one big family, isn't it?"

FOR MORE ON BURGERKILL, SEE WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/BURGERKILL666/
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WORDS: DAVE EVERLEY

DEAD SET

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BACK FROM THE DEAD

When Static-X decided to reunite behind a ghoulish tribute to dead frontman Wayne Static, the internet flipped its shit. The band insist it's all part of the healing process

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Static-X, back in the day (left to right): Koichi Fukuda, Tony Campos, Ken Jay, Wayne Static

People who knew Wayne Wells say there was a switch that flipped in his head when he stepped onstage. Away from the spotlight, the Michigan-born, Los Angeles-based singer/guitarist was a man of few words, unless you knew him well. Not so much shy as reserved, taciturn. But once he stepped out there it was game on. His long black hair would be spiked upwards in one electric-shock mass. His voice became a guttural industrial growl. The man who was content to sit quietly and keep his own counsel in private would suddenly become a fulcrum of energy in public. That's when Wayne Wells became Wayne Static.

"He was quiet as a mouse offstage, then he'd get up there and do the big rock voice, then get offstage and not say a word again," says Tony Campos, bassist and Wayne's long-time bandmate in industrial/nu metal heroes Static-X. "He was kind of a timid guy initially, but once you got to know him he opened up."

If Tony says this with a tinge of emotion, it's because he's talking about his friend and sometime antagonist in the past tense. On November 1, 2014, Wayne Wells died after ingesting a toxic mixture of prescription drugs and alcohol, the result of an addiction that plagued his later life and alienated him from his former bandmates.

But his story isn't over. Static-X's fractured original line-up – Tony plus drummer Ken Jay and guitarist Koichi Fukuda – reunited this year for a tour to mark the anniversary of the band's 1999 debut, *Wisconsin Death Trip*, and a mooted new album due later in the year. Taking the place of their fallen comrade is Xero, a mysterious singer in a Wayne Static mask. It's equally macabre, celebratory, controversial and downright bizarre.

"This is celebrating the record, and it's celebrating Wayne," says Ken Jay. "To remember the good times we had. But this is catharsis too, for all of us."

Wayne Wells and Ken Jay arrived in Los Angeles from Chicago in the early 90s, just as nu metal was starting to make its presence felt in the city's clubs. They had met back in the Windy City, when the drummer auditioned for Wayne's band, Deep Blue Dream.

"WHEN I HEARD WAYNE HAD DIED, I THOUGHT IT WAS A JOKE"

TONY CAMPOS

"I go in and play for maybe 30 seconds and Wayne just stops me," recalls Ken. "I think, 'Oh, he hates me.' And he goes, 'Ken, we'd *pay* you to play in this band,' and that was it. Then we went and had a beer afterwards, and I don't think he said another word."

It took a couple of years for the pair to find their place in LA. They called themselves Drill at first, recruiting Koichi Fukuda and Tony Campos and experimenting with a range of sounds from post-grunge to hardcore punk. But things started to shift after they changed their name to Static-X, their new industrial-tinged direction dovetailing with the emerging nu metal scene.

"We got in on the tail-end of that just as Coal Chamber were pretty big, System Of A Down, Snot," says Tony. "They were all on the cusp of getting deals. We just rolled along with it."

During nu metal's blossoming, every band had their USP, and Static X's was Wayne. With his towering hair and Freddy Krueger-style tops, the frontman was one part freak, one part cartoon character, spitting out lyrics about everything from coprophilia to drug abuse (the prophetic *Push It*).

It was the perfect soundtrack for the times. Static-X's debut album, *Wisconsin Death Trip*, was released in 1999 and eventually sold a million copies – not Korn or Limp Bizkit numbers, but not to be sniffed at.

But success brought its own problems. Tours were long and exhausting. Koichi Fukuda quit before the release of the band's second album, 2001's *Machine*; Ken Jay left before the next one, 2003's *Shadow Zone*. Ken is reluctant to go into specifics, but insists that nothing could have prevented it from happening.

"In retrospect, no," he says now. "In the long run, Wayne made his choices,

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One of these things is not like the others...

and me being there wasn't going to affect that one way or another."

Those "choices" would gradually become apparent as the decade progressed. Wayne was dealing with a growing drug and alcohol addiction. While Ken or Tony aren't willing to publicly place the blame, band insiders have suggested his involvement with porn star Tera Wray – later his wife – was the point where things started to go wrong. The couple met on Ozzfest in 2007 and married a year later.

"There was no rampant use of prescription drugs during the heyday of Static-X," the band's former tour manager, Eric Dinkelmann, wrote in a Facebook post in February 2019. "This was something that really didn't come into play until Tera came into the fold.

"WAYNE WOULD THINK THE MASK IS FUNNY"

KEN JAY

No one really goes into the fact that the prescription meds that Wayne was on weren't Wayne's. They were Tera's. Tera got Wayne hooked on medication prescribed to her."

Tony Campos stuck it out in Static-X until the end of the 00s, but the situation became untenable for both of them. "I never quit, the band just fell apart," he says.

Private tensions between the two soon turned to public hostility. Wayne claimed their friendship was nothing more than a "business arrangement", and accused his former bandmate of jealousy after Tera began sitting in on interviews (he later claimed he was joking, though it did little to salvage the two men's relationship).

It was eight o'clock in the morning when Tony got the call from Wayne's tour manager to tell him that Wayne had passed away at home in Landers, California.

"I thought it was a fucking joke," he says. "And then I was just stunned."

An autopsy determined that Wayne had died of multiple prescription drug toxicity, combined with alcohol. Years of "chronic prescription drug and alcohol abuse" had also been a factor. He was just 48.

There was one final twist. On January 13, 2016, Tera was found dead at her home. She had taken her own life.

In October 2018, nearly four years after Wayne's death, the three surviving original members announced they would reunite to mark the 20th anniversary of *Wisconsin Death Trip* and to honour their late bandmate. Tony and Ken had patched up their differences before Wayne's death, but this was something more. "It's all part of a bigger healing process," says Ken.

While the news of the reunion was largely greeted positively, with Wayne's family giving it their blessing, there was one huge, jarring note. Rather than bring in an established – and recognisable – vocalist, they opted to enlist a singer they're only calling Xero, complete with up-swept mitre of jet-black hair and, most controversially, wearing a mask that looks like a zombie Wayne Static. It was a decision that was viewed in some quarters as misguided at best and a sick stunt at worst.

Tony Campos is politely unrepentant. "Yeah, I can see how some people will be shocked and off-put by it. But once they know what's going on, they get it."

Ken Jay has a more strident take on the matter. "Wayne had a terrifically morbid sense of humour. I can honestly tell you he would think this is funny."

The real identity of Xero remains a mystery. The most popular candidate is Edsel Dope of Dope, a band who toured with Static-X in the past and recently opened from them on their US comeback tour. Pushed on who is behind the mask, Tony and Ken are standing firm. "We're having a lot of fun keeping people in the dark about it," says Tony.

Either way, the frontman is set to appear on *Project Regeneration*, a posthumous Static-X album set for release later this year and featuring "unreleased vocal performances and compositions" from the late singer, alongside guest vocalists, of which only Xero and Ministry's Al Jourgensen are confirmed.

"There's going to be at least seven or eight songs with Wayne's vocals on them," says Tony. "And there are five that we developed from Wayne's last demos. So Wayne's fingerprints are all over this record."

But it also carries heavy emotional freight for the people he left behind, not least given the fact that their friendships remained unrepaired at the time he died.

"Had Wayne gotten cleaned up and distanced himself from negative influences, he'd be here with us right now," says Tony. "We were friends for such a long time. With that path he went down, that changed."

"If he was here, we'd probably just be sitting around, drinking coffee, watching some stupid 80s movie," adds Ken. "I don't know if there'd be much conversation." His voice suddenly sounds warm and sad at the same time. "But that was Wayne. I'd be OK with that."

STATIC-X'S UK TOUR STARTS NEXT MONTH – SEE P.109. *PROJECT REGENERATION* IS DUE OUT LATER THIS YEAR

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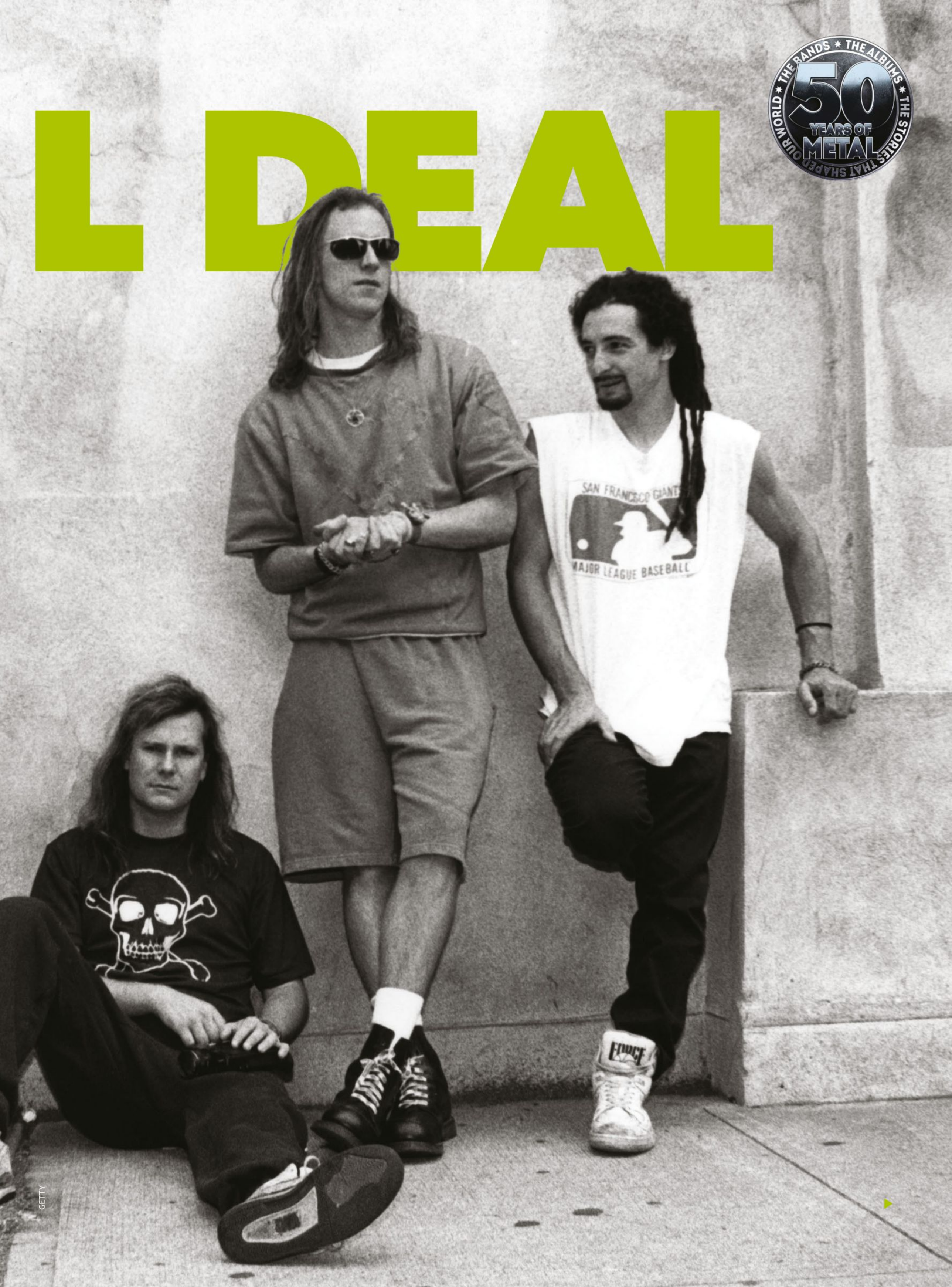
THE REAL THING

With new singer Mike Patton in the ranks, Faith No More's *The Real Thing* took them from obscure alt-metallers to international sensations

WORDS: RICH HOBSON

L DEAL



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FAITH NO MORE

On May 24 1988, Faith No More played their last live show with Chuck Mosley as frontman, at London's Town & Country Club. A punch-up in a hotel lobby several days prior brought long-brewing tensions to a head, and while relationships were mended (barely) enough to see out the end of the band's European tour, it became apparent that the four-year partnership between Chuck and the rest of the band wouldn't last.

Singer-less but not rudderless, the remaining members of the band – drummer Mike Bordin, guitarist Jim Martin, bassist Billy Gould and keyboardist Roddy Bottum – began work on their third record, a release that would change the musical landscape. Returning home to San Francisco, a furious summer of writing and demoing followed, yielding much of the material that would make up *The Real Thing*. The entire record had essentially been written before a replacement singer had even been considered, and while a steady number of people applied for the position, there were few the band contacted to try out. In one of music history's great 'what if' scenarios, one of those people was Soundgarden vocalist Chris Cornell.

"Faith No More asked for Chris Cornell because here was a band that was poised to be great – they just needed an exceptional singer," explains Matt Wallace, *The Real Thing*'s producer and longtime FNM collaborator.

More a 'how's about it?' than a genuine request, FNM instead looked to another distinctive vocal talent. Living almost five hours up the Californian coast in the town of Eureka, Mike Patton was already earning some notoriety as the vocalist of the experimental act Mr. Bungle, a band as likely to launch into proto-death metal howling as they were to blast out an R&B crooner. That band's bootlegs had impressed FNM founders Billy Gould and Mike Bordin enough to invite him down to rehearse, and soon Faith No More had landed themselves a new vocalist.

"Mike Patton was the only guy around who understood the music we were writing," admits Billy. "We just focused on what made the music better – Mike did that more than anybody else."

"*The Real Thing* was us having one last shot at things," Mike Bordin reveals. "England was the closest any audience had come to understanding us, but even then with the new singer nobody knew what we were going to

Mike really enjoyed that burrito

sound like. As for 'Why Mike Patton?' Well, at the time you'd have, like, the pop, Bryan Adams guy, the androgynous glam rock guy, the evil, satanic Sunset Strip metal guy – but we didn't want any of those fuckers, because we *weren't* any of those fuckers. Mike [Patton] didn't fit in anywhere, either – he could be any of those guys and none of them at the same time."

FNM couldn't afford to give Mike Patton time to acclimatise to his new environs; the album had already been written and they were itching to get into the studio while the iron was hot. Luckily, it turned out they had landed themselves an artist whose work ethic could put most industrial assembly lines to shame.

"He was very focused – he wrote all the melodies and lyrics in a two-week span," Matt recalls. "It was exceptional – Chuck needed to be pushed uphill sometimes and be cajoled into the recording process, but Mike Patton was ready to work."

If such time constraints stifled Patton's creativity, it doesn't show – he channelled everything from his inner Tom Araya on *Surprise! You're Dead!* to sleazy lounge singer on *Edge Of The World*. "Having *Edge Of The World* and *Surprise! You're Dead!* on the same record are the bookends of what Faith No More do," says Matt. "I'd liken them to a five-pointed spiderweb pointing in equal and opposite directions; that's what made them unique.""

Gelling as a unit in the studio, the band's next test would be to introduce their new vocalist to their fanbase. The opportunity came on November 4, 1988, at a hometown show at the i-Beam. As with most singer

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changes, it was met with resistance. "After Mike did his first show with us, he got this letter and he was like, 'Holy shit, my first fanmail'," Mike Bordin remembers. "He opened it up and this guy was like, 'You're a macho creep and an asshole. Fuck you, pig – we want Chuck back.'"

Possessing the kind of tour schedule that would give most 80s hardcore bands a nervous breakdown, FNM set out to prove the doubters wrong. By the time *The Real Thing*'s June 20 release date rolled around, the stars had begun to align. A&R reps and industry bodies descended on Hollywood's Roxy Theatre the night before to see the band put on an incendiary performance that signalled the birth of a new era. Closing on a howling rendition of *War Pigs*, accompanied by Slash and Duff McKagan, the band were no longer rank outsiders – their infiltration of the mainstream had begun.

"By the time the band came back to Hollywood from being on tour they were *amazing*," recalls Matt. "They were returning conquerors – they weren't the band I knew as kids. The change in Faith No More from *The Real Thing* onwards is so much more than just getting another singer – it was a transformation of the whole band."

> **"THE REAL THING WAS US HAVING ONE LAST SHOT"**
> MIKE BORDIN

Like most metamorphoses, FNM's success wouldn't come overnight, but the band were determined to play as often as possible to get the word out. Their success was mixed – tours with enormous acts such as Metallica and Robert Plant exposed them to whole new avenues of fame, but they still had to play almost every night to keep their profile up. It had its upsides, though – it also meant they could reconnect with old friends, as they did when on a two-leg tour with Soundgarden and Voivod in January and March 1990, and it also allowed the band to witness history in the making when they played at The Loft in Berlin on November 9, 1989, the same night the Berlin Wall fell.

"The funniest thing in being part of monumental events, is that when they all stack up they start to feel almost normal to you," admits Billy. "We got used to it pretty quickly – but that first year was particularly tough. Some of us didn't have homes to come back to, and a lot of us were living off our per diems [a daily allowance given to the band by the label]."

Everything changed for Faith No More with the release of the album's second single, *Epic* – a fitting name for a song that would launch Faith No More's career into the stratosphere.

"The label had spent their wad emotionally and financially on supporting *From Out of Nowhere* and it did nothing – literally nothing," admits Bordin. "They came to us in London and met us at the Columbia hotel and they basically said, 'Rather than have us pick the next single, we want you to tell us what single to put out.' We unanimously wanted *Epic*, because we loved the song at that point and how it worked for us onstage. It had many different elements to it that weren't traditional in approach."

But out on tour, the band didn't have a chance to savour their success. "We were playing on the road, working our asses off and fucking with each other, so we completely missed it when it blew up!" laughs Bordin. "Somebody would be like, 'It's charting here' or 'It's getting radio play there', but we were just looking to make sure the tour made it all the way to L'Amour in Brooklyn, right? We had no way of knowing it was blowing up as far afield as Australia. *Epic* allowed us to keep working and upped the narrative so far as crowds and people being aware of the band goes."

FNM were now media darlings, the vanguard for an oncoming crashing tide of alternative music that would dominate the next decade. A couple of award ceremonies and an appearance on *Saturday Night Live* brought 1990 to a close, and the following month they ▶

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Faith No More in 1990 (left to right): Jim Martin, Roddy Bottum, Billy Gould, Mike Patton, Mike Bordin

"MIKE PATTON'S FANMAIL SAID HE WAS A CREEP AND AN ASSHOLE"

MIKE BORDIN

were back in front of a massive live audience, at the illustrious Rock In Rio II. They played alongside titans such as Guns N' Roses, Megadeth, Judas Priest and, er, New Kids On The Block.

"Things were changing; it was still the Whitesnake and Poison world, the new breed hadn't come around just yet," Bordin says. "We were insinuating ourselves into the mainstream, taking up the charge from bands like Metallica. You needed bands like Metallica and Guns N' Roses to make it huge but keep in that punk rock energy – it's the difference between [Ted Nugent songs] *Stranglehold* and *Wang Dang Sweet Poontang*. There was less and less nutrition and more acts just surviving, so there had to be some kind of change in there, opening up new fields where something could grow."

The Real Thing had done more for Faith No More than they could have imagined, ambitious vision or not. Having played harder and experienced more in the frantic three years since recruiting Mike Patton, the band had managed to completely infiltrate the mainstream and push themselves as an entirely new movement, standing alongside bands like Jane's Addiction, Living Colour and Soundgarden to present a vision for alternative metal, proof positive that a band can do *anything* and still change the world.

"*The Real Thing* definitely impacted on future bands," agrees Matt. "Over the years I've had a bunch call me up to work with them simply because of that record; System of a Down, Korn, Hoobastank… a bunch that were obviously impacted by that music and what Patton was doing vocally. It truly changed the changed the face of music."

TOTALLY EPIC

Breaking down Faith No More's third album

THE HIT
Epic
FNM's biggest hit was also an albatross around their neck when they got labelled with the 'rap metal' tag. Accusations of inspiring Limp Bizkit aside, *Epic* sees the band firing on all cylinders, mixing ultra-heavy funk, spat verses and an anthemic chorus that feels somewhat incongruous with the band's experiences; they wanted it all *and* had it.

THE CLASSIC
Falling To Pieces
Billy Gould's said it sucks, but the third single from *The Real Thing* is as close to candid as FNM got in the early days. The lines '*back and forth / I sway with the wind*' and '*indecision clouds my vision*' seemingly crystallise Patton's experiences of joining FNM while still tied to Mr. Bungle. Plus, that bassline *slaps*.

THE WILDCARD
Surprise! You're Dead!
Less alt, more metal – this is as riff-heavy as FNM come. This absolute beast originally stemmed from jam sessions held between FNM guitarist Jim Martin and fellow SF-inhabitant Cliff Burton (who also allowed the band to lift part of *For Whom The Bell Tolls*' riff for *Woodpecker From Mars*), the band channelling their most thrash-tastic inclinations.

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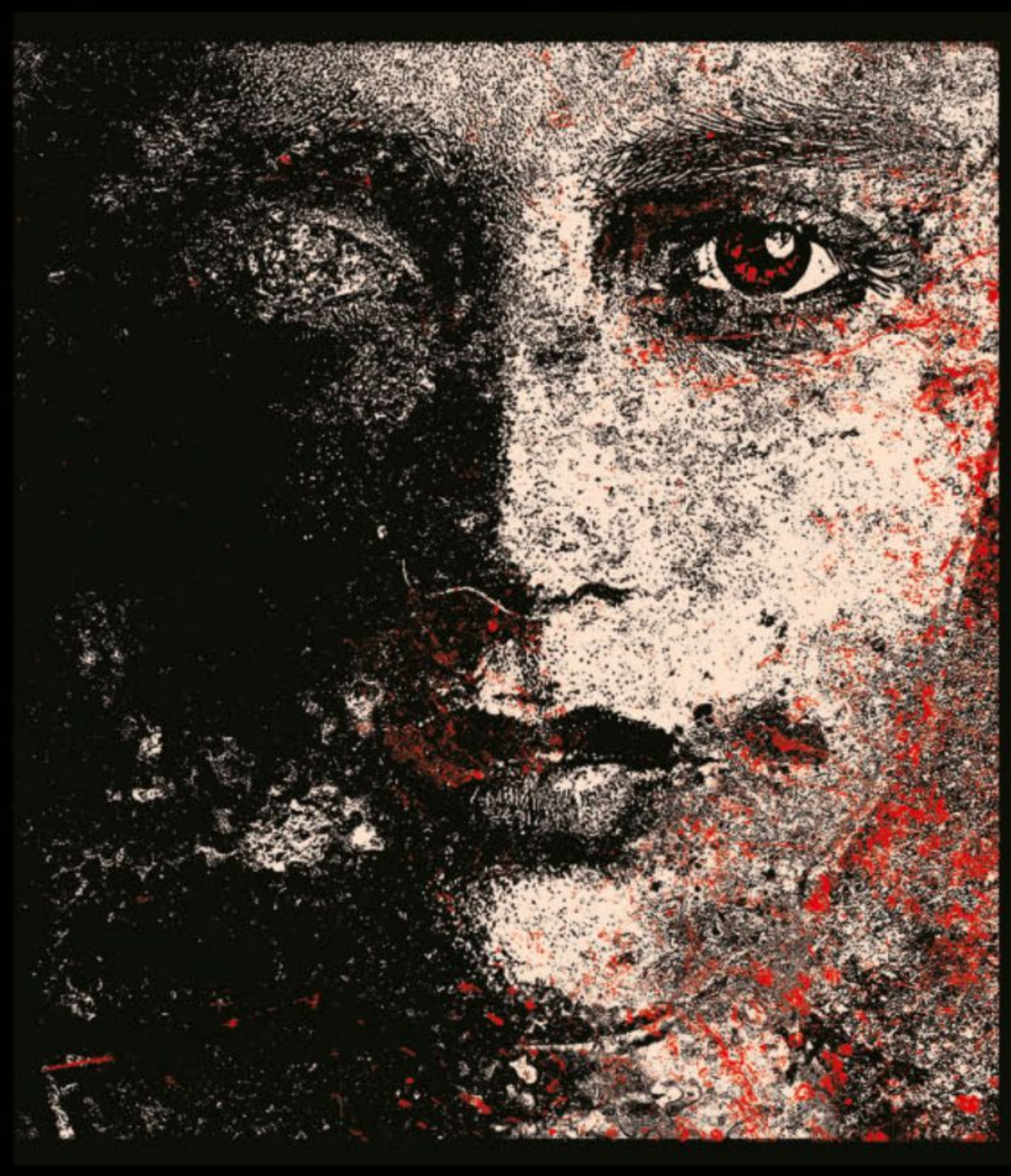

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3TEETH

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

They're championed by Rammstein and Ministry and are trying to overthrow the Presidency with a lizard. Meet 3Teeth

WORDS: DANNII LEIVERS • PICTURES: TINA KORHONEN

Metal Hammer is following 3Teeth through a maze of deserted, graffitied rooms. We're in the bowels of London's Electrowerkz, a grimy steelworks-turned-nightclub and the scene of our photoshoot. "This'll work," vocalist and lyricist Alexis 'Lex' Mincolla beams, as we enter a dark and dingy room, his eyes lighting up at the potential props; a stack of military crates, an iron cage and an abandoned DJ booth.

The LA industrial/cyber warriors are in town to support Ministry on their European tour, but today they also release their third album, *Metawar*. Tonight, they're throwing a launch party, but it feels like a celebration of so much more – the chrome-plated cherry on top of a frenetic few years that's seen the band endorsed by Tool and Rammstein and thrust to the front of the modern industrial crop.

Ten minutes later, we've emerged from the gloom and decamped to a pub for a chat. Oozing cool, with his perfectly coiffured moustache, knee-high boots and omnipresent sunglasses, Lex sticks out like a sore thumb among the office workers enjoying a post-work pint. Merging the stomp of early Manson and the bite of vintage Nine Inch Nails, 3Teeth's hyper-conceptual, ultra-sexualised swagger activates primal human instincts to fight and fuck, but Lex insists there's a deeper meaning behind the band's abrasive machinery.

"Nothing is what it seems on the surface," he says, sipping Guinness and describing the thematic arc that buzzsaws through *Metawar*. "Everything has multiple layers behind it, of agenda and incentive, and the thing on the facade is usually there to misdirect you."

The vocalist spent his early 20s studying political science and economics in Rome out of a desire to be "hyper-educated". ("It was during the Bush administration and everyone had two strikes against them as an American," he says. "They assume you're ignorant.") On 3Teeth's 2017 album, *<shutdown.exe>*, he dissected the concept of 'infobesity', aka information overload, and rejected 'consensus reality', i.e. herd mentality ("Question everything, more than ever. I don't think anything is sincere or genuine at this point"). Yet *Metawar* paints an even more scathing image of a society on the verge of collapse at the mercy of widespread technological advancement and dirty politics.

Onstage, Lex is a leather-clad force of nature, but behind the scenes he's the band's creative and visual epicentre, designing and directing every element of their razor-sharp aesthetic, from music videos to photoshoots. The video for their most recent single, *President X*, is his most political statement yet. In front of an American flag bathed in blood-red lights, 'President' Lex makes a speech at a podium dressed in a

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fascist military uniform. Before long, his skin peels back to reveal a scaly, reptilian creature – a character Lex created to reflect his own personal political disillusionment.

"*President X* was a way for me to explore this concept that it doesn't matter who the president is," he explains. "We wrote our first record during the Obama era when, if you were anti-systemic, it *meant* something. When Trump became president, everyone jumped on that bandwagon of Trump-slamming and I want to be very careful of not writing songs that felt like they're attacking Trump, but rather are attacking everyone. On *President X*, I go after Obama, Bush and Trump on the first line. I wanted on this record to make sure we didn't go left or right, but walked right down the middle."

Do you vote back home?

"No way, I wouldn't sleep at night if I voted."

But how can you expect to have a voice if you don't vote?

"THAT ROBOT IS GOING TO KNOW EXACTLY HOW TO GET YOU OFF"

LEX MINCOLLA

"I don't need a voice," he argues. "I have a voice as a singer. In terms of participating in the delusion of choice… I don't have an interest in that."

Elsewhere, *Metawar*'s visions of our future are equally nightmarish – where mass unemployment due to large-scale automation is rife, and where populism and the introduction of a universal basic wage leads to chaos, with capitalism eating itself. Even sex, Lex says, has an expiration date. "Technology will soon destroy that. We're not going to need each other because that robot is going to know exactly how to get you off."

We guess this means the next 3Teeth album is going to be completely bleak and terrifying? "No, that's the funny thing," he chuckles. "I want to write a really positive, sort of utopic record!"

Lex grew up in Boston surrounded by rock'n'roll influence. His mother was good friends with the then-wife of Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer ("I used to swim in his pool"). Having already fallen in love with 80s glam metal, he was introduced to Sepultura and Morbid Angel by his older brother, who played in local death metal bands. Years later, he moved to LA where he put on an underground tech noir club night called Lil Death, through which he met 3Teeth keyboardist and producer Xavier Swafford.

"It was like church," remembers Lex. "It was every Sunday night, everyone got dressed up and it had this big ornate neon altar. It served as the primordial, black ooze that gave way to 3Teeth. We'd play industrial, really cool techno and heavy metal, but then there'd be this weird witch house vibe to it and we thought, 'What if we just smashed all that together and made a band?'"

Soon after, Lex met Tool guitarist Adam Jones at the wedding of a mutual friend where Lex was the best man and Adam was a groomsman. On their return to LA, their friendship blossomed, as they bonded over videogames. "We'd kill zombies together with our headsets on like nerds," laughs Lex. "I think it was a year later he said, 'Dude, why didn't you tell me you had a band?'"

Adam ended up watching 3Teeth play their next LA gig at the Sunset Strip's The Viper Room, and was so impressed that he casually asked Lex if the band wanted to join Tool on their 2016 US arena tour. Up until that point, the largest crowd 3Teeth had played in front of was around 2,000 people.

"We were going to see *The Martian*, that Matt Damon film," says Lex. "In the line to get popcorn he was like, 'Hey, do you want to come out on the road with us? The lady was like, 'Do you want butter on your popcorn?' and I was like, 'Shut the fuck up what is happening right now?!' Adam was like, 'Don't think about that now,' and I was like, 'How am I supposed to go watch Matt Damon grow shit potatoes on Mars for two hours?!'"

Their first show supporting Tool was at the 12,500-capacity San Diego Viejas Arena, and that night Metallica were in the crowd. "About 15 mins before we go on, Adam was like, 'Hey whatever happens out there, don't worry about it," grins Lex. "Our fans are super-tough sometimes; they booed Mike Patton when he opened up for us.' I was like, 'They're going to eat me alive.'"

They didn't. The band went down an absolute storm and, the following year, they received another call, this time to support Rammstein on another US arena jaunt, in front of an audience more attuned to their steel-jawed onslaught.

"The first night Till's like, 'Come on, come, sips, my room," Lex recalls.

3Teeth (left to right): Chase Brawner, Justin Hanson, Andrew Means, Xavier Swafford, and President X (Alexis 'Lex' Mincolla on his knees)

PHOTO MANIPULATION: ALEXIS MINCOLLA

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And you thought US politics were weird enough already...

“There was a girl dancing naked in the corner and his assistant was pouring drinks for us. And he said, ‘So this moustache. It’s fake?’ I’m like, ‘Nah’ and he just grabs a hold of it. Here I am, shooting vodka with Till Lindemann pulling on my moustache, telling me it’s fake, and that’s how we met. They’re just the nicest, no-ego guys you’ll ever meet. But also, backstage Till is like an action figure; he’s got a huge cigar and six shots of mezcal, he’s like everything you want him to be.”

Fast-forward to the following night, and it’s Ministry’s gig at London’s Shepherds Bush Empire. As 3Teeth kick off the evening, they’re greeted with a rapturous reception and a sizeable pit. It’s been a long time since an industrial band showed the kind of potential that could put them shoulder to shoulder with the scene’s greats, but 3Teeth are elbowing their way into some seriously esteemed company. To record *Metawar*, they enlisted the services of producer Sean Beavan, the man who’s had a hand in some of the best industrial records ever made: NIN’s *Pretty Hate Machine* and *The Downward Spiral*, and Marilyn Manson’s *Antichrist Superstar*. He helped them realise their vision of being a band that combines the legacy of industrial music with a shiny modern future.

“I just fucking rang him up,” says Lex, when asked how the collab came about. “We’d go and record in his house and his wife would cook us dinner every night. Taking the abstract ingredients of industrial music and making it work requires a knowledge of the genre, and Sean knows everything about the shit we do. He co-produced *Antichrist Superstar* with Trent and for us, it’s all about being part of that lore.”

“TILL FROM RAMMSTEIN WAS PULLING ON MY MOUSTACHE”

LEX MINCOLLA

***METAWAR* IS OUT NOW VIA CENTURY MEDIA. SEE MORE AT HTTPS://3TEETH.ORG**

“I WILL TURN AREA 51 INTO AN ALIEN PETTING ZOO”

Lex Mincolla, AKA President X, presents his manifesto for the US election 2020

1 DEPORTING TRUE ILLEGAL ALIENS
“I promise to release a list of all extraterrestrial beings in violation of resource hoarding, deport them to their native planets and seize their atomic gold.”

2 AREA 50 FUN
“I will turn Area 51 into an amusement park run exclusively off dark matter, complete with an alien petting zoo, time distortion portals and quantum rollercoasters. All proceeds will go towards my next campaign promise.”

3 STUDENT LOAN DEBT DOWN THE BLACK HOLE
“Dark matter technology will prove clean energy and unbridled capitalism can become vertically integrated, with further caveats of social change, as all proceeds will go to freeing the American people from their debt slavery.”

4 DARK MATTER, MATTERS
“We stand on the fulcrum point of our extinction due to the rudimentary and energetic failures of combustion energy. I will develop a clear plan to bust big oil and reverse our current climate crisis using protostellar nuclear fission and dark matter reactors.”

5 A NEW AEON OF CELESTIAL FOREIGN POLICY
“With new dark matter technology, we will travel faster and further than ever imagined, allowing us to become a player in intergalactic politics and potentially allowing America to earn parliamentary seats in the Pleiadian High Council.”

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SACRED REICH

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THE REICH TIME

When Sacred Reich split in 2000, they'd run out of ideas and thrash was in a slump. Now, they're back with ex-Machine Head man Dave McClain and ready for war

WORDS: CHRIS CHANTLER • PICTURES: STEPHANIE CABRAL

"It was fuckin' magical," says Phil Rind, Sacred Reich's singer and bassist. He is describing the experience of putting together the band's first album in 23 years – the monster *Awakening*. "We'd just pinch ourselves and look at each other and say, 'This is so killer.' We want the record to do good and we believe people will like it. But even if no one does, we know what we did. That is reward in itself."

Phil and guitarist Jason Rainey formed Sacred Reich in Phoenix, Arizona, back in 1985. The following year, when thrash metal broke through after Metallica's epoch-defining *Master Of Puppets*, they released a demo tape, *Draining You Of Life*. With its sparky blend of ratcheting brutality and precocious songcraft, it quickly became the thrash scene's hottest, most in-demand demo, drawing the attention of Metal Blade with help from local buddy Jason Newsted and his band, Flotsam And Jetsam.

On their debut LP, the 1987 thrash classic *Ignorance*, the young band incorporated a political and social conscience – addressing problems such as pollution, world hunger, American warmongering and indoctrination in schools – that came to distinguish their approach. But they were never dry, worthy or preachy with it, as they proved with 1988's uproarious follow-up, *Surf Nicaragua*.

Throughout the 90s, Sacred Reich's fortunes shifted with those of the ailing thrash genre, from the high-point buzz of 1990's Billboard-charting *The American Way*, to 1996's widely overlooked endpoint *Heal*, via divisive flirtations with grunge, groove metal and funk rock. Before *Heal*'s release, drummer Dave McClain left to join Machine Head, where he remained until last September. And as the 21st century dawned, Phil dissolved Sacred Reich, sold his gear and left the music business altogether. What had gone wrong?

Phil's explanation is simple and honest: "The songs dried up," explains the softly spoken singer in his relaxed, Arizonian drawl. "It was obvious that a band with no songs, you know... things were coming to a close. Maybe it sounds all new agey and shit, but

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I don't think you can force that stuff. A friend describes it as a radio signal: when it's turned on, the songs come."

He reformed Sacred Reich in 1996, to satiate demand for vintage material on the festival circuit, but still that signal remained jammed – until one day when raging new tune *Divide & Conquer* showed up. He remembers the vibe in the room after breaking their duck: "'Wow, this is killer, fuck, we can totally do it!'" he beams. "We spoke to Metal Blade and said, 'We're gonna make a record.' They said, 'Fuck yeah, let's do this!' It was amazing."

The Sacred mojo was working again, but soon had to contend with more upheaval when longtime drummer Greg Hall was dismissed in 2018 ("It didn't work out," is Phil's diplomatic explanation). After this surprise event, writing for the new album accelerated when Phil's friend, Tim Radziwill, a drummer with his own studio, invited the band along to work on new songs.

"At that time, Dave was still in Machine Head," recalls Phil. "Then he split with them, came down and we all started working on new songs together. The thing Dave said that'll always stick with me is: 'I always hoped there'd be a time when I could be in Sacred Reich again.' It fucking almost made me cry. We always got along great, he left for a better opportunity, no one can begrudge him that. But there's a special place for him."

With the *Heal* line-up back in full effect and a clutch of killer new songs demoed, at last Sacred Reich looked ready to grab the world's attention again. But alas, there was one more sad reality to overcome.

"When we went into the studio, it became obvious that Jason wasn't gonna be able to do it – he just wasn't up to it," Phil says quietly. "Man, I fucking cried for two days, it was fucking heartbreaking. I'm probably closer to him than anyone else in the whole fucking world, and when we started the band it was he and I pushing everything, so when it really hit me that Jason wasn't going to be part of it…" Phil's gentle voice cracks with emotion, briefly falling silent. "It was incredibly upsetting. So there was a lot that went into this."

The search for Jason's replacement didn't take them far. Tim Radziwill's son, Joey, played guitar alongside his dad in Phoenix death metal project Dichotomize, and engineers many of his dad's studio recordings. But working on Sacred Reich's demos proved to be a singularly fateful gig for the 22-year-old studio assistant.

Sacred Reich, Phoenix Arizona 1988

"Joey already knew the songs because he'd demoed everything, so after a time he said, 'Come on, let's record the record.' We were like, 'You don't wanna be in a band with a bunch of 50-year-old dudes!' But after two days with him jamming in the studio, it became obvious: Joey *is* our guitar player. He made it so obvious in every way, not just his playing but his attitude. He just fitted right in."

Despite being born the year Sacred Reich's last album came out? "That's pretty funny, isn't it?" smiles Phil. "You know what else is funny? Joey was at a Sacred Reich show before he was even born. His mom was pregnant with him at our show! Isn't that crazy?"

This delightful fact seems to hint that Sacred Reich's sudden, full-force return to the sweet wellspring of inspiration – powerfully demonstrated by the eight killer songs on *Awakening* – was somehow written in the stars. Getting back into the rigours of writing, recording and touring after a generation-long lay-off could have been dauntingly stressful, but Phil feels only good vibes, often referring to the current band dynamic as "special," "magical" and simply "meant to be".

"EGO AND THE SELF ARE THE ROOT OF ALL OUR TROUBLE"
PHIL RIND

Assisting in this regard is Buddhism, which Phil started practising soon after splitting up the band in 2000. "It gives me a better attitude and a different perspective," he reasons. "I'm more chill, more happy, a better person. When I hit 30, a lot of shit in my life changed, and I was like, 'How the fuck did I get here?' And then I realised: you dummy, *you* did it. Everything you did got you here. It was karma hitting me in the face."

The album's lyrical approach became more Buddhist-inspired as the writing process went on. "*Manifest Reality* is pretty much out of the mouth of my teacher, *Death Valley* is about the Bardo – an intermediate state from *The Tibetan Book Of the Dead* – and *Salvation* came from the idea of salvation through music," he explains. "When you go to festivals, no matter what country or background, everyone is together, music has that uniting quality to it. Then there's that truth on a deeper level: we're all the same in the most important ways. No self, no other, no division – that's very pure Buddhism, the interconnectedness of sentient beings. That ignorance – thinking that there is an ego and a self – is the root of all our trouble. It's kinda heavy! It's a fine line between not wanting to push too much onto people, but putting ideas out that are generally positive."

The same cannot be said for the current political situations across the globe. As one of the most outspoken, radical bands of thrash's golden age, how does Phil feel about the current

FRANK WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

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Sacred Reich (left to right): Wiley Arnett, Phil Rind, Joey Radziwill, Dave McClain

rise of populist authoritarianism and the flight to the fringes?

"It's fuelled by the same things: fear and ignorance," the singer says, with the weary regret of the seasoned liberal observer. "When we look at the refugee crisis, which seems to be fuelling a lot of that fear of outsiders, we have to ask, 'How it was created?' That's Western countries bombing other countries and making them unsafe for people to live, so they have to take their family and leave their home. It's karma right in your face.

"It occurs to me, you cannot go around the world invading countries, overthrowing governments that you don't see eye-to-eye with, bombing people into the Stone Age, and not have blowback. Actions have consequences. I often think, 'Why is there so much violence in the US?' But if we've created a society that's very violent because of the violence that we export around the world, that makes perfect sense to me."

In the late 80s, Phil's reaction to the state of the world marked him out as one of thrash's angriest young men; in 2019, his warmth, compassion and inner peace make Sacred Reich a far more rounded, nuanced entity. Our chat is underscored by the gratitude that Phil feels at getting a second chance with his band, and how much this opportunity means to them this time around.

"Maybe it's because we were gone for so long, we had a different level of appreciation for what was happening, especially with Dave coming back," he considers. "When you're young and making records, you're just doing your thing, that's how things are. When you're older and you never thought this might happen again, and it does, it takes on a different feel."

With his band firing on all cylinders, his 23-year songwriting drought consigned to history and the radiant positivity of his Buddhist worldview, Phil sounds increasingly fired up with enthusiasm for Sacred Reich's future.

"I already have ideas for the next record!" he declares. "It's pretty amazing how everything came together to where we are today. Making the album was fucking incredible, I just can't wait to get out and play it to people, because I feel like our band's better than it's ever been. We're at a really great place, and it all feels like it's supposed to be this way."

***AWAKENING* IS OUT AUGUST 23 VIA METAL BLADE. SACRED REICH TOUR THE UK IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER – SEE P.109 FOR DETAILS**

PICTURE: CREDIT

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

After quitting Machine Head last year, Dave McClain tells us why he's stoked to return to his old fam

What's it like being back in the band after so long?
Dave McClain: "To be honest, it feels like home. Before I joined Sacred Reich in 1991, I was a fan. When I heard the *Surf Nicaragua* EP [released in 1988] I was blown away, and they became one of my favourite metal bands. Twenty-four years of life went by and we all had very different journeys, so really we're back together with a common goal to play music and be happy."

How does the experience of Sacred Reich differ from Machine Head?
"To me, Sacred Reich has always felt very organic and real. I mean, it's four guys who are pretty low in the looks department, ha ha, with nothing but guitars, amps and drums. But we're a great-sounding band and that's the most important thing to us."

The band didn't record an album without you. Do you think you the missing piece?
"I'm just happy that Phil decided to start writing music again. Over the years I always asked him to do a new Sacred Reich album, even when I knew it wouldn't have included me. I'm such a fan that I just wanted new songs. So much so, that I actually wrote a few songs and sent them to him in hopes that it might get him interested in writing again! When he told me was writing and sent me a song, I was so happy! I was blown away by it and I knew right then and there that I wanted to play drums on the album. I was in a dark place musically and hearing these new songs made my love for playing music come back!"

Is the hope now to stay in the band for good?
"I would love nothing more than that! Being back with the guys is amazing and we know we have a big job ahead of us to get back on everyone's radar, but it's fun and we all respect one another, so it doesn't feel at all like work."

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THE REVIEWS

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EDITED BY: JONATHAN SELZER • PICTURE: JAMES SHARROCK

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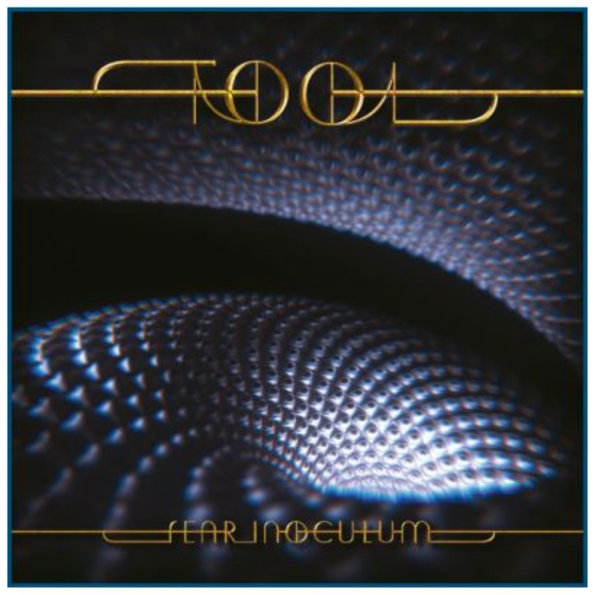
TOOL

Fear Inoculum

MUSIC FOR NATIONS/SONY MUSIC

LA's multi-dimensional metallers journey beyond all expectations



THIRTEEN YEARS. THIRTEEN years of speculation, rumour and conjecture. Finally, the most mysterious album since Guns N' Roses' *Chinese Democracy* is here. It boils down to nine tracks – six songs and three interludes – and you have to wonder; having made so many people wait for so long, can Tool create something that matches the expectation?

Tool certainly know how to build the drama; pressing play and hearing Adam Jones' guitar gently teasing the opening to the title track, morphing from a cello-imitating creak into something more recognisable as Tool, as the rest of the band threaten to lock in with him two or three times before it finally all gels, is a breathtaking start. The rest of the song sets the album's stall out. A lengthy, ever-evolving masterpiece, it uses restraint expertly. Barely staying in the same time signature for more than one riff, it feels like an entire album's worth of ideas all on its own. Second track *Pneuma* follows in a similar fashion, with a beautifully clean-sounding Jones riff opening before Maynard James Keenan comes in with a stabbing, rhythmic vocal pattern. Again, it weaves in all manner of directions, less like preordained musical passages and more like random breathing patterns or flowing water – a living organism rather than a song. Then Justin Chancellor's bass smashes you in the chest, a chugging riff comes in and Tool spend a few bars just being a great metal band.

Keenan is on sumptuous form, although oddly used sparingly, but he gives an album of such outrageous density and grandiosity some genuine emotional heft. *'We are all born of one breath'* he sings on *Pneuma*, and there is a sense throughout that *Fear Inoculum* is tackling man's need for nature in an increasingly digital world, and the two fighting for space. It's there in the melancholic

"THE ALBUM IS AN ENIGMA INSIDE A PANDORA'S BOX"

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croon of *Descending*, where Keenan sings of *'Drifting through this boundless noise'*. The song is prefaced by the *Blade Runner*-style synth of *Legion Inoculant* and juxtaposes industrial noise with the sound of water at the start. The *Schism*-esque lament of *Invincible* is probably the closest thing we get to a single here, and the frankly bonkers *Chocolate Chip Trip*, which sees Tool go electro and drummer Danny Carey go full Buddy Rich, then leads into *7empest*. At points reminiscent of *Cold And Ugly* from their debut *Opiate* EP, it's the highpoint of the record, comfortably the heaviest moment and with Keenan sounding genuinely embittered… with a touch of Thin Lizzy-style twin-guitar lead for good measure. As is true of everything on *Fear Inoculum*, it could only be Tool. Each member brings something unique; Jones' slow-hand chameleon guitar, Carey's remarkable off-kilter African rhythms and Indian tabla and Chancellor's lucid, liquid bass thump all take over as lead at one point during each movement. Although Keenan's presence isn't as pronounced as before, his biting-to-soaring vocal dexterity remains otherworldly.

Fear Inoculum is so layered, and with such depth, that reviewing it here and now feels premature. But what cannot be denied is that this enigma inside a Pandora's Box feels like a justification of why the world never grew tired of the idea of new music from Tool. And it's why we'll wait with bated breath again when 2032 rolls around for another dose.

FOR FANS OF: **Failure, King Crimson, Can**

STEPHEN HILL

ACRES
Lonely World
A WOLF AT YOUR DOOR

UK post-hardcore debutants put themselves through the wringer

Honesty and authenticity flow through the veins of this southern UK post-hardcore outfit. Slick, neatly produced and mature beyond their years, Acres' debut album is as toweringly cinematic as it is unnervingly realistic, drawing on honest, raw emotions of isolation and depression throughout. The band's screamo roots break the surface for a fleeting glimpse of unclean vocals on the title track, while frontman Ben Lumber's haunting cries through *Be Alone* and shattering highs in *Sharpen Your Teeth* highlight their potential to breathe fresh life into post-hardcore. Meandering through the bleak chugging of *Hurt*, the defiant *You Are Not* and the swaying melody of *Lullaby*, *Lonely World* pours its weary heart out in poetic style.

FOR FANS OF: **Architects, The Amity Affliction, Parting Gift**

ALI COOPER

AGENDA
Apocalyptic Wasteland Blues
FYSISK FORMAT

Crusty Norwegians stir some added flavours into the pot

Apocalyptic Wasteland Blues is rooted in d-beat crustpunk, but adds enough variety and flavouring to complement the band's bright take on the style, as well as ignite controversy amongst the old guard ready to dismiss anything but stagnation in the name of Discharge and Anti-Cimex. The additives and flair the Norwegian quartet offer up are enough to individuate them from the pack; the guitars are uncharacteristically pristine, Hans Olaf's black metal screech provides a flowing smoothness to the exhortations about society's failings, and *Cognitive Dissonance* and *Walls*' melodic layers border on Fat Wreck-style punk. Whether crusty folk can wrap their heads around Agenda's approach shouldn't cloud the fact the subgenre's boundaries have been opened wide on this record.

FOR FANS OF: **Disfear, Unkind, Tragedy**

CONNIE GORDON

ALL OUT WAR
Crawl Among The Filth
UNBEATEN

NHYC veterans forgo progress for pit-incitement

New York metallic hardcore mob All Out War have thrashed out furious riffs and filthy beatdowns since 1991. Their seventh full-length, perhaps unsurprisingly, doesn't mess with the previously established formula. *Contempt Be Thy Faith* slows things down a touch to add a hint of variety, but for the most part, this is an all-out sonic assault designed to incite pits and make heads bang. It's NYHC that will be familiar to anyone who has ever slam-danced to Sick Of It All or Earth Crisis. It ain't big and it ain't clever but neither does it try to be and if that's what you're after, you've come to the right place.

FOR FANS OF: **Sick Of It All, Earth Crisis, H2O**

REMFRY DEDMAN

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Slipknot get some quality family time once more

SLIPKNOT

We Are Not Your Kind

ROADRUNNER

Metal's masked maniacs still refuse to conform

SUCH IS THE reverence attained in the 20 years since their self-titled debut, there are very few events in our world as fanatically venerated as a new Slipknot record. Yet even the most dedicated maggot would struggle to defend 2008's *All Hope Is Gone* or 2014's *.5: The Gray Chapter* as enthusiastically as the band's untouchable opening triumvirate, both being often great but occasionally forgettable. Though few metal acts of their or any other era can carry that same youthful vigour and savage outlet for years and years after their initial success, there's always been the hope that Slipknot were impervious to the cruel hands of time. But while that sense of knife-edged danger and excitement was still emitted once the masks and boiler suits were donned in the live setting, it was starting to diminish on record.

Thankfully, not only have the band's recent shows proven that the Iowans still leave a trail of exhilarating destruction in their wake onstage, but the urgent recent singles, 2018's *All Out Life* and this year's *Unsainted*, offered welcome evidence the band are more than capable of delivering that rabid clatter of percussion, fiendish riffs, demented scratches and stabs of electronics that still sounds unlike anything else. The defiant proclamation of the former provided the album with a title, so to see it omitted from the final cut is perplexing, yet its maniacal bluster is evident throughout the album, with the nine members clearly having plenty of fire and clawing demons that need exorcising. But while halfway track *Red Flag* is a breathless rush from beginning to end, each of the album's other seething blasts is met with an ominous trip into uncomfortable realms and/or a massive vocal from one of, if not *the* best singers in our game, as shown by *Unsainted*'s undeniable hook. Whether it's *Nero Forte*'s lumbering battering that meets a creepily angelic chorus or the militaristic beats and warped squall of effects throughout *Orphan*, *We Are Not Your Kind* offers plenty of new ways to tweak the established, anthemic Slipknot formula.

As ever there are different apparitions lurking behind every corner. *Birth Of The Cruel* sees a deformed monstrosity lurching and contorting itself out of the nu metal graveyard, the twisted lullaby of *My Pain* descends into a fog of dystopian synths, while the minimalist *Spiders*, with its eerie John Carpenter piano, gets more sinister with every listen. But it's the more mournful *The Liar's Funeral* and the penultimate *Not Long For This World* that leave the biggest impact, with Corey Taylor at both his most vulnerable and assured over a tragic tapestry of unsettling synthetic atmosphere and huge cinematic peaks. Ending with *Solway Firth*'s climactic presence that builds through a melée of crashing drums and precision melodic riffs, it's as dramatic conclusion to an album that the band have yet achieved.

While many will naturally but unfavourably compare it to the triumphs of yesteryear, *We Are Not Your Kind*, though far from flawless, can stand on its own merits, being both immediately arresting as well as having enough challenging depth to reveal new surprises with every listen. Fierce, troubled, confrontational and more often than not bewildering, there's still no one else on the planet like Slipknot.

FOR FANS OF: **Korn, System Of A Down, Rammstein**

ADAM REES

PRESS/ALEXANDRIA CRAHAN-CONWAY

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BAD OMENS
Finding God Before God Finds Me
SUMERIAN

West Coast alt-metallers fail to broaden their horizons

It's been six years since Bring Me The Horizon released *Sempiternal*, and its influence on that part of our scene continues to become more pronounced as time passes. Bad Omens' second full-length takes all of the surface of that album, yet struggles with capturing the inventiveness and songwriting nous to make anything other than a pale facsimile of BMTH during that period. A song such as *Blood* sounds like a perfect follow up to *Sempiternal* cut *The House Of Wolves* on first glance, all quick-time riffing and an anthemic chorus beefed up with some electronic swells. Then it just vanishes from your mind the second it ends, and is replaced with yet another unremarkable set of modern metalcore tropes. More pointless than bad.

FOR FANS OF: Bring Me The Horizon, Of Mice & Men, I Prevail

STEPHEN HILL

BLACK FUTURES
Never Not Nothing
MUSIC FOR NATIONS

Industrial-minded mavericks get their nihilistic groove on

With an immersive blend of industrial noise-punk, alt-rock and swelling synths, London's Black Futures embrace sonic anarchy on their full-length debut. Their buoyant modus operandi occupies a space somewhere between Nine Inch Nails and Death From Above 1979 with 11 tracks more akin to a swarm of nihilistic anthems than mere songs. Lead single *Love* is a punch to the sternum followed by an invitation to dance as grit-laden beats take centre stage while the spaced-out psychedelia of *Karma Ya Dig!?* celebrates the weird and wonderful world this duo inhabit, making room for a plethora of ear-catching grooves. Elsewhere, caustic melodies punctuate blasts of distortion; paying homage to the experimental krautrock of yesteryear, *Tunnel Vision* twists and turns amongst electronica-spliced beats before exploding into an infectious chorus loaded with frenzied vocals. In *Never Not Nothing*, Black Futures have crafted an anarchic call-to-arms.

FOR FANS OF: NIN, Kraftwerk, Beastie Boys

SOPHIE MAUGHAN

CAZADOR
Failure To Thrive
SELF-RELEASED

Bostonian voyagers torn between sludge and the sublime

Boston's Cazador are shining light into our current dark age by incorporating some post-rock shimmer into their sludgy call for action. After a downbeat instrumental opening, *Skeleton Crew* pushes its way to the fore on chugging riffs and acidic vocals before stepping back into melancholy passages. *Failure To Thrive* plays the quiet/loud dynamic throughout, and while those shifts are occasionally abrupt, they work well for the most part, particularly on the beautiful first steps of *Kingdom*, which renders all previous aggression to dust. The track wanders through cascading guitars before weaving harder sections into the calm that continues to simmer below the surface, suggesting that post-rock is where Cazador's true strengths lie. It's a highlight of a record from a band who aren't quite sure what they want to be… yet.

FOR FANS OF: Alcest, Amenra, Cult Of Luna

CHERYL CARTER

COGNIZANCE
Malignant Dominion
PROSTHETIC

Yorkshire's tech-death debutants calibrate their crunch

Though *Malignant Dominion* is their first full-length release, Leeds quartet Cognizance have been steadily perfecting their tech-death formula over a number of years and a quartet of EPs. As a result, the album lands on Prosthetic's roster lean and potent, trimmed of all excess and aimed straight at the solar plexus. Underneath Henry Pryce's compendium of growled voices, Alex Baillie offers up a balanced choice of tricky arpeggios and crunching riffs throughout the likes of *A Lesson Through Sickness* and *Unforeseen Consequences*, with a few guests including Aborted's Mendel bij de Leij and Job For A Cowboy's Jonny Davy adding to the maelstrom. While *Ether Of The Void*'s grand bluster jumps out of fiddly twists, there are plenty of textures on display, with the moody prog of the title track and the eerie harmonics of *An Existential Battle* closing things in brooding fashion.

FOR FANS OF: The Faceless, Necrophagist, Archspire

ADAM REES

ENTOMBED A.D.
Bowels Of Earth
CENTURY MEDIA

Swedish diehards tighten the noose on album three

THERE WAS AN undeniable logic to LG Petrov's decision to keep the Entombed flag flying under a new-ish name back in 2014. In the absence of the definitive article, Entombed A.D. have been doing the decent thing: playing classics from the legendary Swedes' revered catalogue at live shows and bashing out albums that, while hardly earth-shattering, were brutal and boisterous enough to justify the continued use of that name. But now that Alex Hellid has revived the Entombed mothership, Entombed A.D. have slightly more to prove on album number three.

If there was a problem with 2014's *Back To The Front* debut and its 2016 follow-up, *Dead Dawn*, it was that the Swedes' songwriting never quite matched the sharpness and bite of the greatest Entombed songs, overburdened with roll and a little lacking in the death department. It seems highly unlikely that the songs on *Bowels Of Earth* were written with some underlying career agenda in mind, but everything from opening assault of *Torment Remains* to the closing spookfest of *To Eternal Night* should really be accompanied by the sound of a giant iron gauntlet being tossed to the floor.

While it's not exactly a wholesale transformation, *Bowels Of Earth* is the first Entombed A.D. album that feels free from the band's debt to a towering legacy. Tighter, faster, much more vicious and wielding far more sonic heft than their predecessors, songs like heads-down sprints *Hell Is My Home* and *Through The Eyes Of The Gods* hark back to the skewed hookiness of death metal's early 90s heyday, while *Bourbon Nightmare* and their cover of Hank Williams' *I'll Never Get Out Of This World Alive* slam Discharge-style punk and creepy doom-death together in a charged shower of poisoned beer and broken teeth. Done and dusted in an admirably snappy 36 minutes, *Bowels Of Earth* is where Entombed A.D. truly go it alone.

FOR FANS OF: Unleashed, Firespawn, Black Breath

DOM LAWSON

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Weirdly, that Middle Earth outcasts sitcom didn't make it past pilot

HAMMERFALL

Dominion

NAPALM

Polarising power metallers return to unifying form

THIS GOTHENBURG QUINTET'S 1997 debut, *Glory To The Brave*, landed like a studded leather asteroid on a metal world awash with short hair and baggy sportswear. Death and black metal's bubbles had burst, and the underground fashion was for wildly diverse experimentation. So Hammerfall showed up at just the right time, embracing a superheroic strain of fantastical melodic speed metal that attracted equal degrees of scorn and adulation, boldly repudiating oppressive 90s notions of 'cool' and bringing tears of joy to the eyes of men (overwhelmingly men, let's face it) who'd felt shamed into piping down about their love of 80s Helloween, Manowar and Accept.

After their first two LPs galvanised a newly ascendant power metal scene into heeding their call to arms, Hammerfall settled into a regular release schedule of hits, misses and maybes, guaranteeing a great time at Eurometal festivals but seldom rivalling the impact and fire of their early work, and often snootily damned as 'too simple/too happy/too cheesy'. *Dominion*'s advance cut, *(We Make) Sweden Rock*, is all of these things, but it also rules, so there's the magical paradox of Hammerfall right there.

On their 11th album cover, knightly band mascot Hector rises from Hell with dramatically increased armour-plating – seemingly a signpost to the increased weight and attack of the guitars, as well as a darker lyrical approach in songs like *Dead By Dawn* (not a Deicide cover, alas), marauding Vietnam-themed opener, *Never Forgive, Never Forget*, and the brooding occult title track.

Hammerfall's founding inspirations remain firm, but there are discreet touches of Mercyful Fate and Motörhead in among the gleaming Priestly chops and call-and-response gang chants, as well as a wide-eyed enthusiasm and dizzying vigour that belies these Swedish bandmates' valorous march into middle age, and should surely raise the fist of the hardest-hearted cynic.

FOR FANS OF: Judas Priest, Dio, Helloween

CHRIS CHANTLER

COLORED MOTH

DIM

WOLVES AND VIBRANCY

Tensile, angular Germans with a distinctly American attitude

Berlin trio Colored Moth are on to a good thing, etching out some wirily dynamic post-hardcore that harks back to genre heroes of the 90s (Hoover, Shotmaker, Drive Like Jehu) and 00s (City Of Caterpillar, Ten Grand, Stop It!!!) alike. If they occasionally ladle in a dash too much sass you can chalk it up to youthful exuberance and forgive them their slight follies because there's still plenty here to revel in. The claustrophobic clangour of *Maelstrom* and the taut, jittery journey taken by *Indefinite Hiatus* hit home particularly hard, and if Colored Moth currently owe a lot to their influences there's enough subtle tinkering at the edges to suggest that they might yet have another stage of metamorphosis to undergo.

FOR FANS OF: Fugazi, Sofy Major, At The Drive-In

ALEX DELLER

CROBOT

Motherbrain

MASCOT

Pennsylvanian rockers dish out an extra helping of heavy

Fuelled by a steady diet of old-school boogie rock, mid-90s grunge and an alleged delicacy dubbed "chicken biscuits" (us neither…), the fourth LP from the Pennsylvania quartet sees them plunge into darker waters and features the heaviest material they've ever recorded. Though the album is a front-loaded affair, *Burn*, which is full of deft fretwork, harmonicas and sci-fi sound effects, is monster, as is the metal, grunge and classic rock hybrid *Drown*, which calls to mind *Facelift*-era Alice In Chains. *Alpha Dawg*, the tongue-in-cheek, funk-flavoured ode to everyone's favourite teen wolf, Scott Howard, is a curveball, but singer Brandon Yeagley makes it work thanks to a magnificent, leather-lunged vocal.

FOR FANS OF: Alice In Chains, Monster Truck, Inglorious

EDWIN MCFEE

CROWN THE EMPIRE

Sudden Sky

RISE

Humanity-questioning metalcore crew get no fresh answers

An emotive blend of soaring melodies and impassioned anthems, Crown The Empire's fourth album sails into familiar sonic realms. *Sudden Sky* is modern metalcore-meets post-hardcore as the Texan quartet question humanity and the ensuing chaos surrounding it. Both *What I Am* and *Red Pills* surge with the kind of chest-beating anthemia designed to evoke huge singalongs while *MZRY* harnesses twinkling keys and infectious lead breaks, its relentless energy designed to get the pit raging. Elsewhere, the title track moves seamlessly between searing cleans and guttural growls, but ultimately *Sudden Sky* reverts back to the safety of familiarity.

FOR FANS OF: Of Mice & Men, The Amity Affliction, Ice Nine Kills

SOPHIE MAUGHAN

WorldMags.net

DEATH SS
Rock 'N' Roll Armageddon
HIGH ROLLER

Seminal occult metallers invoke brief spells of wonder

The insidious impact of Death SS on occult rock and horror-indebted heavy metal, not to mention their innovative amalgam of doom with proto-thrash, needs to be recognised more. Led by vocalist Steve Sylvester through various incarnations and reformations since 1977, the Italian ghouls even pre-dated Mercyful Fate, and here their love of theatrics remains apparent. While there are a few entertaining tracks replete with clever, cobwebbed arrangements and dazzling lead guitar, the album as a whole feels like a collection of standalone, individual tracks: some strong and some painfully average. Thankfully, however, their past industrial metal flirtations are kept to a minimum, which will please their cult following formed during the band's formative Paul Chain era.

FOR FANS OF: Mercyful Fate, Ghost, Witchfinder General

DEAN BROWN

DEVOURMENT
Obscene Majesty
RELAPSE

Lone Star cult heroes salute the violence of the slams

Twenty years have passed since the release of Devourment's seminal debut, *Molesting The Decapitated*. The Texans' deeply warped recipe for brutal slamming death metal has spawned thousands of acolytes and the subgenre itself has never been healthier, which may explain why *Obscene Majesty* sounds so utterly imperious. We're back, Devourment appear to be saying, so pay your respects, you fucking weaklings. Death metal rarely gets heavier than this, let alone more heroically fucked-up: from murderous opener *A Virulent Strain Of Retaliation* onwards, the band's fifth full-length oozes, spits and bubbles like some hellish lava flow, guitars re-imagined as mutant toxic slurry, vocals as barbaric retchings into mankind's hollowed-out skull. Nightmarish beatdown blizzards like *Profane Contagion* and *Sculpted In Tyranny* offer pure sonic barbarism, defiantly leftfield but still hellbent on smashing your face in.

FOR FANS OF: Internal Bleeding, Skinless, Vastum

DOM LAWSON

DOMINATION INC.
Memoir 414
STEAMHAMMER/SPV

Self-styled Infants of thrash grow up for album number two

Following a successful British tour in March, UK-based Greek metalheads Domination Inc. unveil their second album. With an average age of 20 years old, the five-piece add modern groove to the power of thrash, heralding what they ambitiously call "a new age of heavy metal". Sure enough, *Memoir 414* is loud, aggressive, ultra-rhythmic and in your face – an improvement upon their embarrassingly titled debut of five years ago, *Infants Of Thrash*. Theodore Papadopoulos growls impressively, but their real aces in the pack are the rhythm team of bassist Jim Kakes and sticksman Aggelos Karatzas, who keep the engine room running at full tilt. At just under 10 minutes long, the album's multi-tempoed highlight is *Day VIII Deus' Ignorance*, but the likes of *The Sickening* and *Dehumanized* will satisfy those who prefer shorter, leaner, bloodier cuts of meat.

FOR FANS OF: Kreator, Sepultura, Machine Head

DAVE LING

EQUILIBRIUM
Renegades
NUCLEAR BLAST

Germany's epic metallers add some knobs to twiddle on

Rammstein may be Germany's biggest metal export, but Equilibrium have been flying the flag for epic metal since 2001. Their sixth effort is a bombastic and soaring album that keeps their momentum marching on, with a few new surprises thrown in. A heavy reliance on electronic elements, akin to the synthwave movement, is mixed in with the metallic guitarwork propelling the trajectory of the music upwards. *Himmel Und Feuer* hits the sweet spot of this fusion and is a live anthem in the making, while the eyebrow-raising cameo of rapcore crew The Butcher Sisters on *Path Of Destiny* shouldn't work, but its execution feels natural to the expansive soundscape that Equilibrium have forged here. It may be laden with cheese, but *Renegades*' fun-filled nature will crack a smile on the sternest of metal faces.

FOR FANS OF: Ensiferum, Die Apokalyptischen Reiter, Finntroll

JAMES WEAVER

SMALL MERCIES

Where EP is short for 'Epic Potential'

BESVÄRJELSEN
Frost EP
BLUES FUNERAL

The Swedish doom crew return with a spaced-out five-tracker loaded with blazing fretwork, hypnotic interludes and surging, tooth-rattling climaxes. Think Pink Floyd dropping peyote on a warm desert night with Electric Wizard.

JOE DALY

THE CONTORTIONIST
Our Bones
EONE

If their last album played with atmospheric sound-scapes, this four-track EP hints at heavier climes. Intense bursts of aggression intermingle with Sigur Rós-esque melodies while retaining those tech-leaning nuances.

SOPHIE MAUGHAN

DROWN THIS CITY
Alpha // Survivor, EP
UNFD

These post-hardcore Australians know how to write a banging chorus just as well as they know their way around a techy, glitchy riff. Newly signed to UNFD, Drown This City are bringing more tastiness from Down Under.

DANNII LEIVERS

EVA BARTOK
Eva Bartok
SELF-RELEASED

This splenetic post-hardcore act come hurtling out of Wales with froth round their mouths and murder in their eyes, brimming with wiry riffs, righteous ire and vocals that sadly tend towards wheedling and petulant.

ALEX DELLER

ROTTING CHRIST/ VARATHRON
Duality Of The Unholy Existence
HELLS HEADBANGERS

One song each from these Hellenic BM gods. Rotting Christ's *Spiritus Sancti* proves a grimly vicious, while *Shaytan* confirms that Varathron deserve more recognition. Hails all round.

DOM LAWSON

WORMED
Metaportal EP
SEASON OF MIST

Brilliantly impenetrable sci-fi metal that requires a fistful of calming medication and guidance from the ghost of Philip K. Dick to properly fathom. Nucleus and Ulcerate fans rejoice, all others flee before the alien onslaught!

ALEX DELLER

WorldMags.net

Killswitch Engage refuse to let their future go up in smoke

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

Atonement

MUSIC FOR NATIONS

Jesse Leach returns from the brink with a belter

AS ONE OF the most respected and imitated bands in our world, every new Killswitch Engage album carries a sense of occasion, but their eighth album, *Atonement*, arrives amid particularly frenzied anticipation. Just last year, frontman Jesse Leach was forced to undergo throat surgery, leaving him unsure if he'd ever be able to sing again and the band facing an uncertain future, but emotional first single *Unleashed* put any such fears immediately to bed. The vocalist sounds better than ever throughout here, with both his gut-punching roars and transcendent cleans elevating a band already on excellent form. The most talked-about track here will easily be *The Signal Fire*, a collaboration with ex-Killswitch frontman Howard Jones that people have been losing their shit over since the band announced it on Instagram last year. Tearing out of the blocks with a thrashing riff, amid guitarists Adam Dutkiewicz and Joel Stroetzel's trademark gleaming death metal leads, Howard and Jesse lead their two-pronged attack with devastating power, their voices entwining for its massive chorus. It's classic Killswitch and an absolute belter.

Whereas 2016's *Incarnate* was bruised and reflective in tone, *Atonement* all but bursts its seams with positivity and triumph. *The Crownless King*, which features the distinctive growl of Testament's Chuck Billy, is one of the many moments when Jesse's lyrics spill over into political territory, with cries of *'We defy you!'* Covering similar ground, *Us Against The World* and *As Sure As The Sun Will Rise* revel in rhythmic grooves, irrepressible melodies and huge choruses. These aren't the most immediate songs Killswitch have ever put together, but only a few listens are needed before they're lodged firmly in your cranium. Yet what will stick with you long after closer *Bite The Hand That Feeds* brings things to a rabid finish is the metalcore godfathers' consistent ability to make their sound feel perennially fresh.

FOR FANS OF: Trivium, Lamb Of God, Machine Head

DANNII LEIVERS

ESSENCE OF DATUM

Spellcrying Machine

SEASON OF MIST

Belarusian instrumentalists add some emotion to their noodling

If the thought of fiddly instrumental metal gives you cold shivers, this Belarusian duo should be a refreshing tonic. Yes, the likes of *Vitality* and *Spellcryer* could be world-beaters with a killer vocal, but instead the pair let their musicianship stir the soul. Fans of the strident riffs of Skeletonwitch and Trivium might well be drawn in by *Synthetic Soul Extractor*'s righteous classicism and *Pendulum*'s sharp thrash assault. *Cavum Atrum* brings things to an epic conclusion with its windswept melodic black metal tones and Pavel Vilchytski's jagged drum fills. Rather than elevator music, this is a soundtrack to climbing mountains.

FOR FANS OF: Trivium, Skeletonwitch, Wintersun

ADAM REES

FALSE

Portent

GILEAD MEDIA

Black metal rites from the ruptured heart of Minneapolis

Minneapolis sextet False's second album is a three-part contemplation on loss, written in a period of mourning that pushes the limits of their elongated, undulating black metal. Drenched with washes of melodramatic synth, *A Victual To Our Dead Selves* is a frantically elaborate, epically urgent dash. *Rime On The Song Of Returning*'s fervent blasts are backed by the sonorous pound of ritual drums, skittish buzzsaw guitars, and frontwoman Rachel's animalistic vocals. *The Serpent Sting, The Smell Of Goat* ramps up to an explosive and grandiose close. At times False's convoluted songwriting begs for focus, but for the most part they've crafted an absorbingly dense journey that offsets their emotional outpouring with a visceral edge.

FOR FANS OF: Emperor, Panopticon, Absu

TOM O'BOYLE

HALSHUG

Drøm

SOUTHERN LORD

Danish crust-laden noise-punks play fast and get weird

It was obvious from their *Dödskontrol* debut EP in 2013 that Halshug weren't in the business of fucking about. Crusty to the core and thrillingly direct, the Danes blurred the lines between punk rock primitivism and something more avowedly twisted. Three albums later, they haven't evolved much beyond that original blueprint, but *Drøm* is easily the most convincing and whiplash-inducing of their efforts to date. As straight-ahead and vicious as they often are, Halshug's strength has long lain in their more experimental instincts. There's no denying the adrenaline rush delivered by the likes of opener *Kæmper Imod* and the heads-down clatter of *Taenk På Dig Selv*, but it's the slow-burning *Spejl*, the dusty, disquieting ambience of *02:47* and closer *Illusion*'s barrage of pounding psych-punk that lift this to a higher level.

FOR FANS OF: Integrity, Discharge, Unsane

DOM LAWSON

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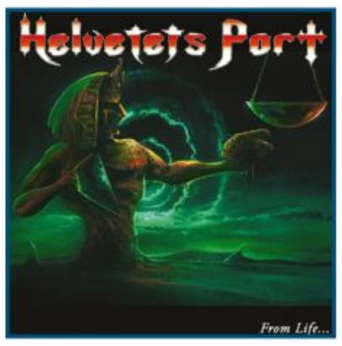

HELVETETS PORT
From Life To Death
HIGH ROLLER

Eighties-obsessed Swedes head down the retro rabbit hole

Hot on the heels of Hammerfall's new LP, here's another group of earnest time-warped Gothenburg rivetheads paying scrupulous homage to 80s spandex metal. But where Hammerfall evoke the biggest beasts of the era, Helvetets Port proudly hail the weird, rare, Swedish cult names like Zone Zero, Gotham City and Nectaris; accordingly, *From Life To Death* has obsessive zeal and passion in spades, but deployed in a more eccentric, free-ranging way, structures seeming to flow out of weird dream states. What these Swedes lack in dexterity and anthemic bravado they gain in quirky atmospheres, rickety mystique and loose, warm chemistry. Ten years after their debut LP, this hour-long follow-up improves on every facet of sound and performance, packed with cryptic curios and arcane rough diamonds.

FOR FANS OF: Slough Feg, Heavy Load, Cirith Ungol

CHRIS CHANTLER

HERE LIES MAN
No Ground To Walk Upon
RIDINGEASY

Fuzzed-up and Afro-funky foursome forge ahead

It's never entirely clear whether oddball subscenes will endure, but there is something irresistible about Here Lies Man's woozy co-opting of Afrobeat and acid rock that should defy the usual, trend-destroying odds. It certainly helps that the LA quartet have a distinctive sound, even as countless likeminded bands emerge in theirs and Goat's wake, and *No Ground To Walk Upon* briskly hammers that fact home. What it doesn't really do is offer anything new or present any fresh takes on a winning formula. Largely a continuation of last year's *You Will Know Nothing*, slabs of fidgeting, fuzzy funk like *Clad In Silver* and the flute-powered *Washing Bones* point to a sharpening of the band's songwriting chops, while *Get Ahold Of Yourself* provides a sole moment of ingenuity, as HLM morph into 60s gangster flick soundtrack merchants, albeit still shoulder-deep in groovy bad juju.

FOR FANS OF: Vôdûn, Goat, Clutch

DOM LAWSON

HESITATION WOUNDS
Chicanery
DEATHWISH INC

Hardcore A-listers unite to fight the depraved and the powerful

Is an album really an album when it's only 13 minutes long? In the case of Hesitation Wound's *Chicanery*, the answer is a resounding yes. Despite the punchy running time, this hardcore supergroup (Trap Them, Touché Amoré, The Hope Conspiracy, Gouge Away) pack a lot into their second full-length and vocalist Jeremy Bolm's lyrics are spat with such venom that it's difficult not to fall completely under their aggressive spell. Beginning on the morose *Viewing (Pt. 2)* before spinning into the feisty *Paragons Of Virtue*, *Chicanery* doesn't take pause for breath. Jeremy's lyrics bite with rage at the modern world that is tangible from the outset. *Hellevangelist* spits with indignation at those in positions of power preying on those less fortunate and the knowledge that the cycle must be broken is a theme that's rammed home to great effect.

FOR FANS OF: Drug Church, Touché Amoré, Birds In A Row

CHERYL CARTER

HUMANITY'S LAST BREATH
Abyssal
UNIQUE LEADER

Swedish death crew's terrifying new chapter unleashed

Following on from 2016's *Detestor* album, Humanity's Last Breath open up a nightmarish wormhole of calculated brutality that would give Cthulhu a run for his tentacles. This is humanity-dwarfing, atmospheric ultra-death metal to the core. Although *Bursting Bowel Of Tellus* is a gruesome opener, it isn't until the pulverising third track, *Fradga*, which builds off the quasi-industrial landscape of grooves and gothic atmospheres, that the Swedish outfit really settle into this record. Going further than simply sticking a few riffs and blastbeats together, their uncompromising structural complexity, devastating execution and leaching terror is a return to the glory days of Decapitated's *Organic Hallucinosis*. Embodying death metal's artistic integrity, this is Humanity's Last Breath's finest hour that will push your brain to its limits.

FOR FANS OF: Decapitated, Thy Art Is Murder, Fit For An Autopsy

HYWEL DAVIES

Knocked Loose: hardcore's latest young turqs

KNOCKED LOOSE
A Different Shade Of Blue
PURE NOISE

Kentucky hardcore crew start to justify the hype

THE SUCCESS KNOCKED Loose experienced off of the back of their debut full-length, *Laugh Tracks*, in 2016 was surprising in many ways. Firstly, it usually takes hardcore bands decades before any commercial or critical approval comes their way (think of the cult of Black Flag or Refused), so to see such a straight-ahead hardcore band get such hype was unusual. Secondly, there didn't appear to be anything that Knocked Loose were doing that was evolving the hardcore sound, unlike, say, Code Orange or Turnstile. They appeared to be a fairly standard metallic hardcore band in the right place at the right time.

So, there's a fair bit of pressure on the young Kentucky quintet on this second album, and *A Different Shade Of Blue* is probably a perfectly pitched follow-up to *Laugh Tracks*, with enough that is familiar to fans of sinew-snapping punk rock being sated whilst adding a few more sonic detours. The excellent *By The Grave* doesn't just have a name that is metal as fuck; it also taps into the gruelling, guttural groove of the early 90s Floridan death metal scene, and it's followed by *In The Walls'* rolling, chainsaw riff and the angular, swirling throb of *Guided By The Moon*.

Undeniably, though, Knocked Loose are at their best when chugging through beatdown-heavy crossover songs, aided ably by guests such as Every Time I Die's Keith Buckley on *Forget Your Name* and Emma Boster of Dying Wish on the superb *A Serpent's Touch*. Album highlight *Denied By Fate* does nothing that Every Time I Die, Comeback Kid or Botch haven't ever done before, but when Knocked Loose get it this right the quality of their material is sky high. Overall *A Different Shade Of Blue* is a very enjoyable amalgam of many flavours of heavy music, and if it inspires enough new people to explore deeper into its influences that can only be a good thing.

FOR FANS OF: Incendiary, Judiciary, Code Orange

STEPHEN HILL

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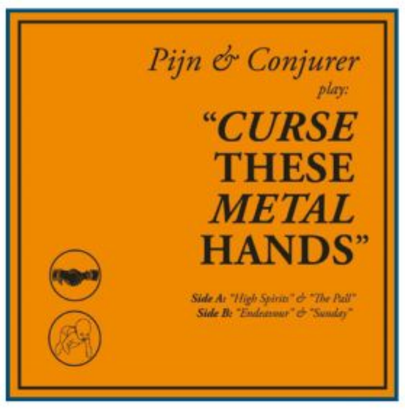
Pijn & Conqueror are developing their own breed of garage rock

PIJN & CONJURER
Curse These Metal Hands
HOLY ROAR

Odd bedfellows make a joint, evolutionary leap



THE COMBINATION OF Manchester post-rock collective Pijn and the Midlands' premier rifflords Conjurer has been an enticing prospect ever since their inaugural performance at last year's ArcTanGent festival in Compton Martin. That initial showing, excellent as it was, provided a mere teaser for the delights this collaboration has in store, which have been brought to fruition magnificently with their debut LP, *Curse These Metal Hands*.

The most obvious point of comparison on first listen is Baroness, specifically the sludgy but jubilant riffs found on the Savannah, Georgian quartet's *Red Album*. But other influences become apparent with further listening; the sheer joy that emerges from the harmonised guitar histrionics of *High Spirits* recalls Thin Lizzy at their most jubilant, while the unusual time signature and twisting opening riff to *The Pall* wouldn't sound out of place ringing out from the strings of Tool guitarist Adam Jones.

At just four songs the album may appear a little slight, but when you consider that three of those four almost reach or exceed the 10-minute mark, it would seem somewhat petty to feel shortchanged. They naturally progress through a range of different moods and styles to provide an eclectic half hour that is full of nuances and subtleties for the listener to unpack.

On the one hand, *Curse These Metal Hands* is the sound of two of the UK's best underground heavy bands getting together and having fun, but on the other hand it's also so much more than that – a collaboration that allows both bands to discover and explore new facets of their own individual sound. *Curse These Metal Hands* will likely see both Pijn and Conjurer improve immeasurably going forward as a result, and considering the sheer quality already on display from both bands, that is a truly exhilarating prospect.

FOR FANS OF: Baroness, Thin Lizzy, Tool

REMFRY DEDMAN

IMPERIUM DEKADENZ
When We Are Forgotten
NAPALM

Searing, atmospheric wonder from the Black Forest's spectral depths

2016's *Dis Manibvs* saw Imperium Dekadenz veering into more atmospheric realms, spangling walls of blackened riffage with ethereal melodies and lustrous climaxes. Their latest release expands upon those ideas with a magnificent 11-track voyage into atmospheric black metal. While the volleys of blastbeats in *Bis Ich Bin* and the title track reaffirm the band's old-school pedigree, immersive hymns like *My Solace (Chorus Of Solitude) I* and *II* and standout *A Cave Called Wisdom* see the Teutonic visionaries conceiving ambitious, multi-faceted hymns of staggering depth and heart-wrenching beauty.

FOR FANS OF: Hermodr, Totalselfhatred, Deafheaven

JOE DALY

JAMBINAI
Onda
BELLA UNION

Far-out folk and post-metal tapestries from the Far East

Jambinai once won an award for 'Best Crossover Album' in their native South Korea. Quite what it is they are crossing over to is up for debate. It's fair to say you'll not have heard anything quite like *Onda* this year, and what an exciting statement that is in 2019. Taking inspiration from both their homeland's traditional folk and contemporary post-metal, Jambinai are disorienting and beguiling in equal measure. Opening track *Sawtooth* alone begins with a silence reminiscent of Talk Talk's magnificent post-rock foundation *The Rainbow* and then journey's off into Eastern mysticism, scathing black metal pace and Cult Of Luna-style walls of noise. And that's just the first track. A superbly unique sound clash.

FOR FANS OF: Hermodr, Totalselfhatred, Deafheaven

STEPHEN HILL

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD
Infest The Rats' Nest
FLIGHTLESS

Prolific Australians rockers play hard, but safe

In the streaming era, bands have resorted to longer album cycles to make up the income they once earned through album sales. It's unusual, therefore, for a band to release new material in back-to-back years. This Melbourne outfit have released 14 albums in their seven years together, including this, their second release of 2019. Set aside quality-over-quantity concerns, because it's better than you'd think, mainly sticking to the reliable blueprint of jackhammer tempos, buzzsaw riffs and ripping solos. Yet while belters like *Self-Immolate* snarl with frenzied riffs and a streetwise swagger, the tracks often bleed together into a mish-mash of testosterone-drenched hard rock. Decent for a spin or two.

FOR FANS OF: Electric Frankenstein, Airbourne, Hookers

JOE DALY

WORLD SERVICE
Heavy metal uprisings from around the globe

ALL WE'VE KNOWN
Dissonance
SELF-RELEASED

Wielding blistering drums, contrasting serene clean vocals with devastating growls and a host of refreshing riffs, this South African metalcore crew have unleashed their debut LP in cataclysmic fashion.

ALI COOPER

HEMISFERIO
Anacronia
DYING VICTIMS

Conjuring NWOBHM vibes from Peñaflor, Chile, Hemisferio have more rough than smooth edges. Vocalist Carlos Contador is an enjoyably wayward shambles, but the passion and spirit is still irresistible.

DOM LAWSON

PACIFIST
Greyscale Dreams
SELF-RELEASED

This post-hardcore quartet take inspiration from the anxiety of their urban existence in Mumbai. The four songs on their debut EP display a strong 90s flair, recalling the likes of Quicksand and Snapcase.

REMFRY DEDMAN

PRESS

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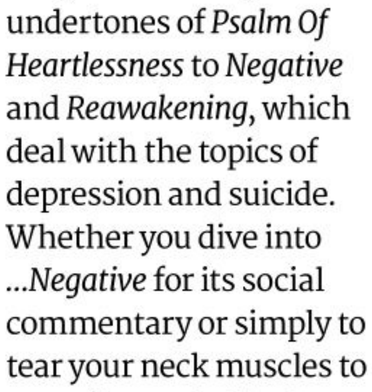
KRYSTHLA
Worldwide Negative
INITIATE AUDIO AND MEDIA

Hard-hitting metal crew combine the personal and the political

Northamptonshire's Krysthla have already tasted victory with the follow-up to their 2017 debut, *Peace In Our Time*; the video for *Zero Sum Game* recently bested Slipknot in a reader's vote of *Hammer*'s online Tracks Of The Week feature. *Worldwide Negative* is delivered with equal measures of forceful, energised and satisfying chaos. The quintet's persistently harrowing assault still proves a rousing experience thanks to meaty percussion and punishing chord progressions, all topped with frontman Adi Mayes' blistering vocals. Lyrically, the album ranges from the political undertones of *Psalm Of Heartlessness* to *Negative* and *Reawakening*, which deal with the topics of depression and suicide. Whether you dive into *...Negative* for its social commentary or simply to tear your neck muscles to some fantastically chuggy riffing, Krysthla's latest is a strong continuation of their metal crusade.

FOR FANS OF: Slayer, Machine Head, Slipknot

LUKE MILNE



LEDGE
All I Hope For
TRANSLATION LOSS

Ex-Weekend Nachos frontman turns his scalpel to Sabbath

Ledge may not add a whiff of originality to the doom/sludge metal conversation, but if *All I Hope For* demonstrates anything it's the subtle differences and innate advantages dwellers of the American South have in purveying this style of extremity. Hailing from the bustling, urban hub of Chicago, Ledge – the solo project of former Weekend Nachos frontman John Hoffman – is obviously inspired by Southern sounds, but a careful listen reveals a concrete, cold and mechanised feel to the way Black Sabbath's riffs are usually gutted and elongated. *Deformed* and *We Suffer* are suitably molasses-paced and tar-thick, but are also far more tightly wound, almost as if city-stressed urbanite Hoffman is in a rush to exude his hatred and make bad decisions instead of moseying along with a loose and swampy swagger before ruining his life and the lives of others.

FOR FANS OF: Eyehategod, Acid Bath, Iron Monkey

CONNIE GORDON

METH.
Mother Of Red Earth
PROSTHETIC

Windy City experimentalists stay focused, causing concussion

The trouble with a lot of experimental music is that the creators often get caught up in being avant-garde at the expense of cohesiveness, structure and direction. For a good portion of their debut full-length, Chicago's Meth. know when and how to rein in the weird stuff in order to zero in on pummelling you with antagonistic black metal speckled with abrasive, industrialised noise and late-90s metallic hardcore. The concrete-block guitar tone and dystopian dissonance put tracks like *Child Of God* and *Her Womb Lays Still* in league with Hydra Head Records' glory years. Even when they take slight turns towards the meandering and overly eclectic on *Inbred* and *Cold Prayers* there's at least an oppressive wall of pounding drums and agitating guitars to provide adequate release from what's supposed to be effects-pedal tension.

FOR FANS OF: Botch, Daughters, Deathspell Omega

CONNIE GORDON

NECRONAUTICAL
Apothesis
CANDLELIGHT

UK black metal quartet get the full wind in their sails

Having displayed glimmers of promise since their debut album in 2014, Necronautical's third effort is the complete package. *All Is Vanity* opens *Apotheosis* in explosive fashion as guitar licks ensnare your attention, while *Totentanz*'s slow-burning musical vortex threatens to consume you whole at the halfway mark. But for all their ferocity, there is an elevating subtlety here. Underlying symphonics, splashes of melodic guitar work and harmonised vocal chants inject the album with plenty of spine-tingling moments. Balancing a vicious and primitive sound with polished production and bombastic components is no mean feat, but it's one the quartet achieve with absolute ease. UK black metal is on scorching form as of late, but with *Apothesis*, Necronautical can rest assured that they are up there with the best.

FOR FANS OF: Wode, The Infernal Sea, Wolvencrown

JAMES WEAVER

Sacred Reich have found their way out of the thrash desert

SACRED REICH
Awakening
METAL BLADE

Politically charged thrash originals break a near-quarter-century silence

1996 FOUND HEAVY music deep in the throes of an identity crisis. Grunge had put a steel-toed boot into the side of hair metal and kicked the entire genre into the Canyon Of Irrelevance. Metallica had left diehards feeling angry and betrayed when they released a radio-friendly batch of jams called the *Black Album*. Meanwhile, a bland, flavourless porridge called 'alt-rock' clogged the airwaves. It was hardly surprising that 1996 would see the last new Sacred Reich release for a very long time.

Formed in Phoenix, Arizona in the mid-80s, Sacred Reich made their bones with a hyper-aggressive style of politically charged thrash that stood in defiant opposition to the over-polished commercialism of the mainstream. 1996's *Heal* marked their last studio outing until they broke up in 2000, eventually reuniting in 2006. It would take another 13 years before the quartet would release *Awakening*, their first collection of new music in 23 years. Spoiler alert: it was worth the wait.

The titular opening track reveals the thrash veterans to be operating at the absolute peak of their game with a siege of growling riffs, hard-driving tempos and the kind of blazing fretwork that makes grown men squint and clench their teeth in assent. The return of drummer Dave McClain (ex-Machine Head), has infused the material with both precision and velocity, while new rhythm guitarist Joey Radziwill piles kerosene-soaked riffs onto the razor-sharp attack of guitarist Wiley Arnett. Vocalist/bassist Phil Rind sounds as hale and vital as he did 25 years ago. From the unrelenting power grooves of *Salvation* to the old-school throwback, *Killing Machine*, *Awakening* unfolds with the barbarous rage of a street fight. And yet, behind a steady campaign of mouth-watering riffs and shout-out choruses, these eight tracks rank among the catchiest that the band have ever composed. Thrash metal is alive and well, and with their latest campaign, so are Sacred Reich.

FOR FANS OF: Death Angel, Artillery, Kreator

JOE DALY

PRESS/STEPHANIE CABRAL

WorldMags.net

Tarja is still mining a deep well of drama

TARJA
In The Raw
EARMUSIC

Finland's symphonic chanteuse heightens the drama

TARJA TURUNEN'S 14-YEAR solo career has seen her branch out, both sonically and conceptually, in unexpected directions. Musically, the Finnish soprano has dabbled in metal, classical and progressive styles, and back in 2016 she dropped two studio albums, including a 'prequel', *The Brightest Void*. A year later, she released a gothic, graphic novel to accompany her creepily beautiful Christmas album, *From Spirits And Ghosts (Score For A Dark Christmas)*, featuring herself in animated form.

Her fifth studio album, *In The Raw*, doesn't break new ground in the same way as albums past, but it might well be her most dramatic yet. Some tracks, such as *Spirits Of The Sea* and *Serene*, sound like a movie soundtrack. *The Golden Chamber (Awaken/Lupoton Yö/Alchemy)* is the album's Disney-esque showstopper, a magical, glimmering mood piece where Tarja's huge voice rides myriad emotions, backed by symphonic orchestra. Equally, über-ballad *You And I* finds Tarja drowning in strings, and it's in these histrionic moments where the chanteuse sounds completely in her element and in control, relishing the opportunity to demonstrate the extent of her admirable, operatic vocal range.

The album's heavier moments work well too, albeit not to the same degree. Opener, *Dead Promises*, features a very decent turn from Soilwork's Bjorn 'Speed' Strid and nods to the symphonic stylings of Tarja's Nightwish past, and *Goodbye Stranger* is an excellent duet with Lacuna Coil's Cristina Scabbia. Both tracks are belters, but *In The Raw* shines brightest when the grandiose bombast is given free rein. Things reach an apex on *Shadow Play*, which somehow manages to find yet another level of extra to ascend to. Amid thundering drums, a huge choir and a massive, explosive finish, it sounds like it's been written to bring every future Tarja show to a breathtaking close. It suits her theatrical brand to a tee, letting everything rip in a maelstrom of drama.

FOR FANS OF: Nightwish, Epica, Within Temptation

DANNII LEIVERS

SANCTION
Broken In Refraction
PURE NOISE

Pumped and primal anxiety from the nu/metalcore borderlands

Long Island hardcore five-piece Sanction resurrect the early 00s, when nu metal was trampled by metalcore. Every song on their second album is a short, sharp shock reliant on anxiety-riddled harmonics, David Blom's brazen bark and seismic breakdowns. The arduous verses of *Answers From A Syringe* build to shuddering break over two minutes, before *Radial Lacerations*' energetic bounce snaps you out of it, only for the frantically stabbing *Mirror Syndrome* to again knock you senseless. Referencing hardcore's mutation through metalcore into deathcore, Sanction deliver a punishing record ultimately written with the road and moshpits in mind – primed for primal release.

FOR FANS OF: Arkangel, Through The Eyes Of The Dead, Knocked Loose

TOM O'BOYLE

TWILIGHT FORCE
Dawn Of The Dragonstar
NUCLEAR BLAST

Swedish lords of power metal pomp lead a new charge for glory

Twilight Force aren't ones to shy away from epic sagas, but they are perhaps facing their biggest challenge with new blood Alessandro Conti. The vocal powerhouse behind Luca Turilli's Rhapsody, Alessandro's lyrical delivery is a no-brainer for these Swedes' über-bombastic fantasy ride, but much of TF's success to date is owed to the departed Christian Eriksson: metal's Legolas with the larynx to match ZP Theart's upper register. Personal taste will determine if the switch casts the same spell as 2016's *Heroes Of Mighty Magic*, but you can still latch your elfin ears onto an album's worth of riff-addled Disney-sprinkled hymnic tales of the Dragonking quicker than you can say "Dracarys!"

FOR FANS OF: Dragonforce, Fairyland, Luca Turilli's Rhapsody

HOLLY WRIGHT

UNIFORM/THE BODY
Everything That Dies Someday Comes Back
SACRED BONES

A sonic match made in the most caustic corners of Hell

This second collaboration from two of the most ill-starred acts operating at extreme music's fringes should suit you down to the ground if you've ever wanted to drill a hole in your skull and wash out your negative thoughts with scalding bleach. *Everything...* assembles burning-wire guitar parts, withering vocals and danceable, processed beats to showcase a surprisingly soft, pink, pop-informed underbelly. *All This Bleeding* mixes twitchy electronica and post-punk, while the title track lock-grooves us into a very private purgatory. *Penance* sounds like a slinky 80s synth act howling up from the darkest traps of hell. What have they – and more to the point, *we* – done to deserve this?

FOR FANS OF: Godflesh, L.O.T.I.O.N., Author & Punisher

ALEX DELLER

PRESS/TIM TRONKOE

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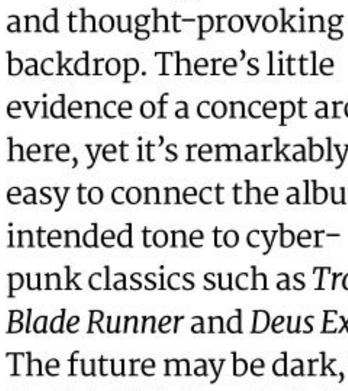
UNPROCESSED
Artificial Void
LONGBRANCH

Slick, futuristic tech metal with a user-friendly feel

The second studio offering from these young German tech metallers follows a state-of-the-art, if well-trodden path. *Artificial Void*'s tightly woven backbone of djenty-rhythmic playfulness bursts repeatedly into majestically expansive chord progressions, and it's undeniably slick. What sets the album apart, aside from Manuel Fernandes's consistently wide-ranging vocal delivery, is the sheer attention to artistic detail and atmosphere. A busy soundboard of mechanical stutterings, computerised beeps and more organic sound effects crafts a captivating, animated and thought-provoking backdrop. There's little evidence of a concept arc here, yet it's remarkably easy to connect the album's intended tone to cyber-punk classics such as *Tron*, *Blade Runner* and *Deus Ex*. The future may be dark, but *Artificial Void*'s tech-infused adventure makes it sound a thrilling place to live.

FOR FANS OF: Kadinja, Animals As Leaders, Born Of Osiris

LUKE MILNE



VULVODYNIA
Mob Justice
LACERATED ENEMY

South African slam merchants find trouble on their doorstep

Leaving behind the sci-fi and horror themes of previous releases, Vulvodynia have embraced more reality-based, but no less grim, subject matter on their fourth full-length. *Mob Justice* is a concept album of sorts inspired by the murkier side of the slam death five piece's South African homeland. Telling tales of corrupt politicians, gang violence, drug epidemics and more, the ferocious opus is crammed with unfathomably low, cranium-cracking riffs and guttural vocals that sound like they come from the darkest pits of Hades. Including guest spots from Gutalax's Martin Matoušek, Malevolence's Alex Taylor and Trevor Strnad of The Black Dahlia Murder – who steals the spotlight with a particularly savage vocal on *Reclaim The Crown Part 1: The Bur)* – it's an uncompromising and often unhinged statement of intent, while *Blood Diamond* and *Nyaope* raise the bar on sonic brutality.

FOR FANS OF: Suffocation, Aborted, Organectomy

EDWIN MCFEE

WIZARD RIFLE
Wizard Rifle
SVART

Oregon noisemongers fail to conjure anything new from their cauldron

Let's face it: barring Electric Wizard and, uhh, Wizzard, most bands with the word 'wizard' in their name just aren't much cop. Despite boodles of gusto, this noisy Portland, Oregon act fail to break ranks, dealing as they do in solid riffs rather than solid songs. It's a semi-heavy, semi-good brand of grunge-y noise-rock that they peddle, the duo barrelling merrily along and nodding to Big Business and Black Cobra without leaving any real mark of their own. This said, there's some quirky individuality buried deep amid the stodge – here's hoping they tease out more odd melodies and off-kilter tricksiness next time around, because there's definitely scope for them to rise beyond many of the unmemorable riffslingers occupying a similar space.

FOR FANS OF: Tad, Akimbo, Melvins

ALEX DELLER

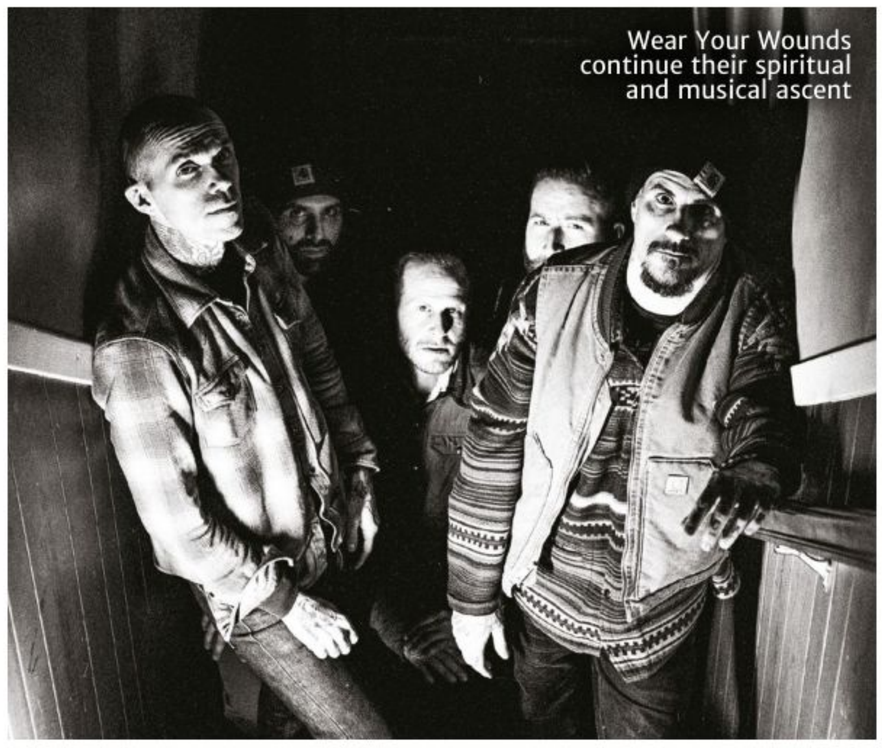
YEAR OF THE GOAT
Novis Orbis Terrarum Ordinis
NAPALM

Progressive occult rockers continue down their own left-hand path

While the occult rock revival produced very few eternal acts, some exceptional bands did break out: Ghost's status rose meteorically and the black flame of The Devil's Blood burned incandescently before extinguishing tragically. Yet unfortunately, Year Of The Goat, who displayed the same orphic energies and keen songwriting of their cult peers, didn't receive the same acclaim. Their first two LPs were brimming with dramatic vocal hooks, musicianship that shared an affinity for classic rock sonic signifiers and the ambitious arrangements of the prog rock scene of the 1970s, together with themes of infernal praise. Their third album, while a slightly more subdued affair, continues within those enthralling stylistic parameters and offers the unfamiliar a timely portal into the otherworld of Year Of The Goat. A talented band that should summon a greater allegiance than they currently do.

FOR FANS OF: Ghost, The Devil's Blood, Jess And The Ancient Ones

DEAN BROWN



Wear Your Wounds continue their spiritual and musical ascent

WEAR YOUR WOUNDS
Rust On The Gates Of Heaven
DEATHWISH

Converge frontman breaks new emotional ground

2017'S DEBUT WEAR

Your Wounds album, *WYW*, showcased a far more grandiose and sensitive side to Converge frontman Jacob Bannon. Written over a period of 10 years, it was a deeply personal project that explored epic song lengths and drawn-out compositions that often built to an epic climax. *Rust On The Gates Of Heaven* marks the first time the official line-up have written and recorded together, an enviable cross-section of musicians that includes current or ex-members of The Red Chord, Cave In, Twitching Tongues and Trap Them.

While the likes of *Tomorrow's Sorrow*, *Truth Is A Lonely Word* and the epic title track don't deviate too far from *WYW*'s post-metal blueprint, there is a newfound sense of slow-hand guitar theatricality added to give even more scope, as if Eric Clapton received a distortion pedal for his birthday and couldn't resist playing the *Top Gun* theme on a loop. It might seem an odd comparison out of context but these sweeping triumphant guitar lines actually provide a pleasing counterpoint to the bleak compositions beneath, adding yet more grandiosity to an already magnificent musical palette of gothic metal and post-rock.

But notably, there are deviations from the established formula too; *Paper Panthers* has the feel of a lost melodic Mastodon song before ending (slightly prematurely if truth be told) on a phrase that could have easily scored one of Ennio Morricone's spaghetti westerns. And then there's *Mercifully*, the beautiful, instrumental orchestral opener with strings that evoke a visceral sense of melancholy, which is later reprised as the album's final track, *Mercilessly*, albeit as a far more doom-laden, distorted composition.

Rust On The Gates Of Heaven continues to show a different side to Jacob Bannon's creativity and provided Converge can continue to exist alongside it, Wear Your Wounds is a very welcome string to his bow.

FOR FANS OF: Chelsea Wolfe, Holy Fawn, Converge

REMFRY DEDMAN

PRESS

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CIRCLE OF WITCHES NATURAL BORN SINNERS

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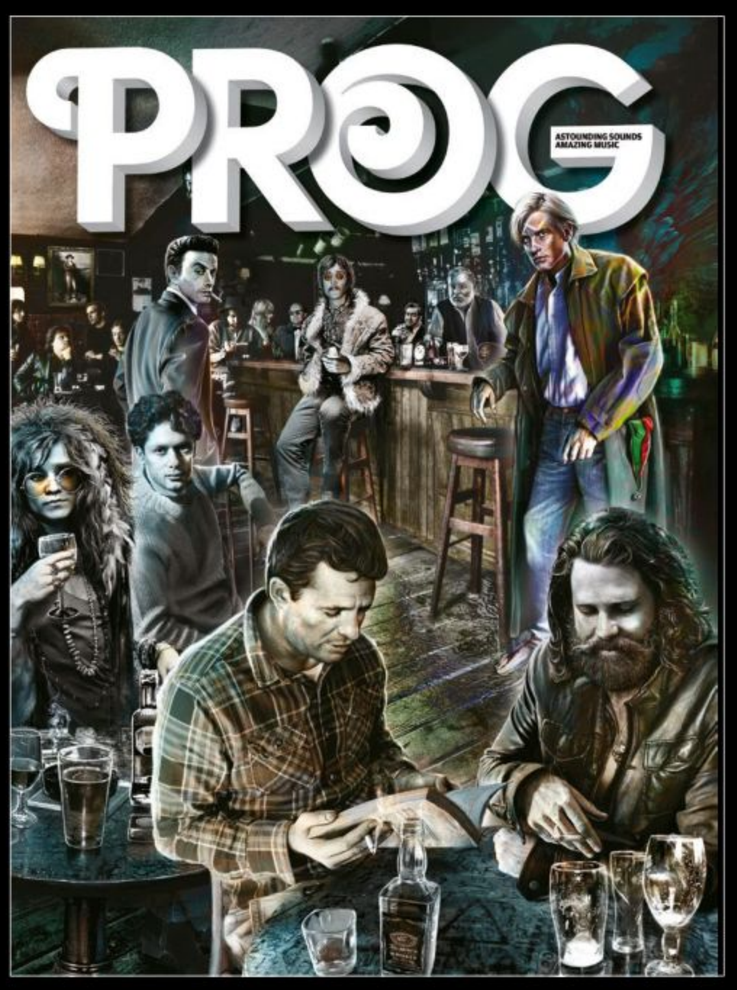

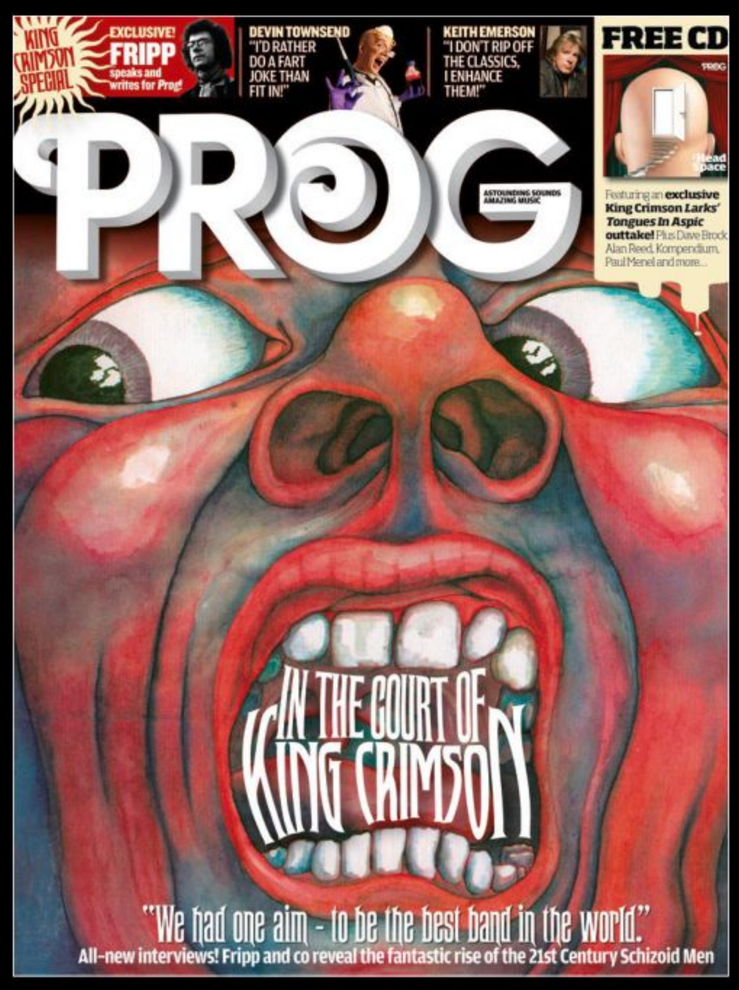

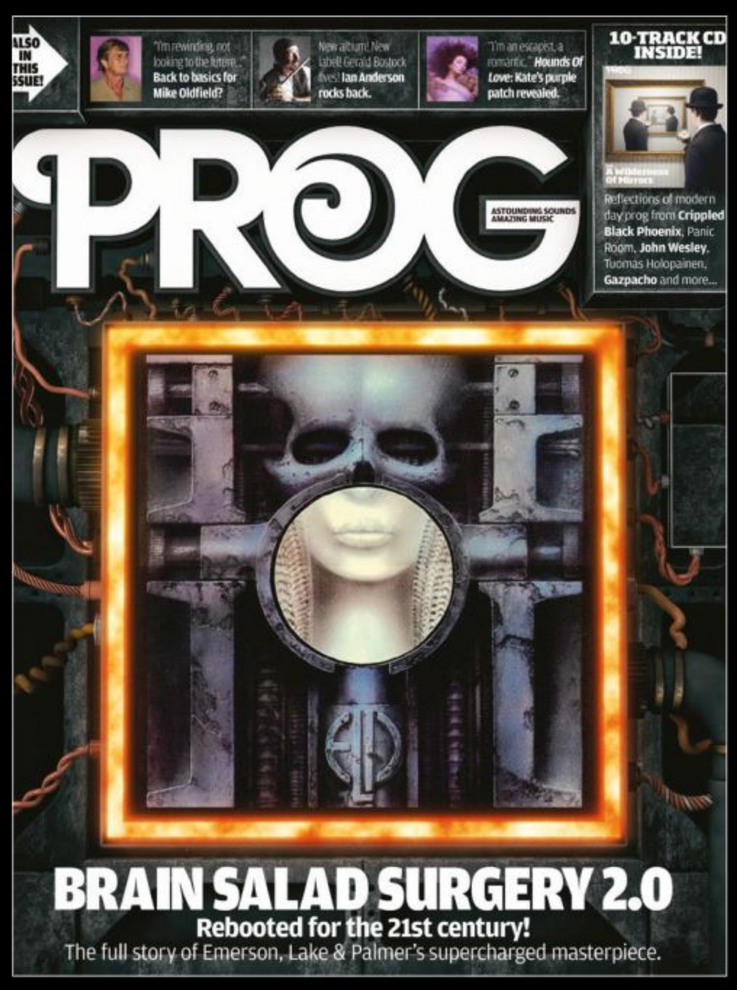

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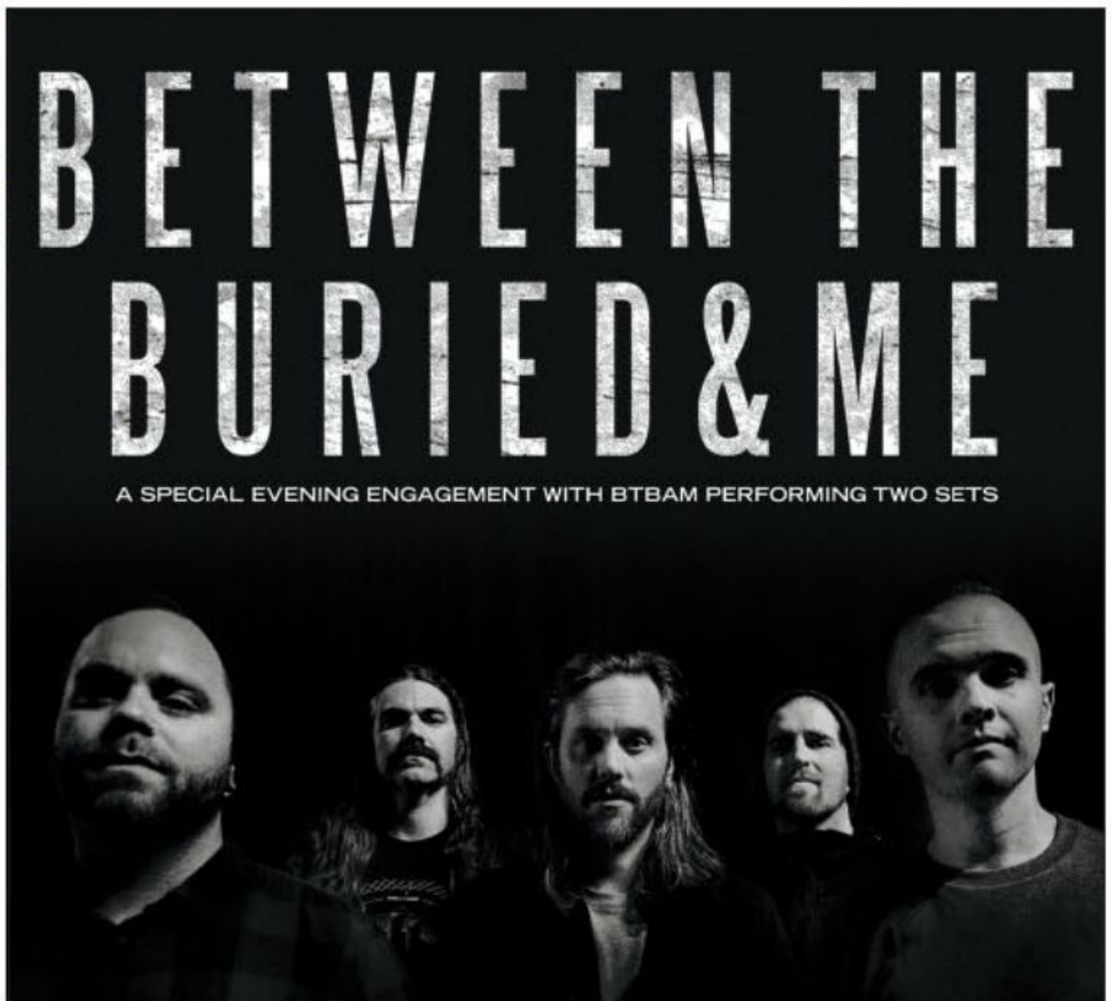

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LIVE EVIL

Your essential guide to the best and the biggest metal bands hitting the UK

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OCT 5 ABERDEEN Event Complex
OCT 7 LEEDS First Direct Arena
OCT 8 BRIGHTON Centre
OCT 10 LONDON O2 Arena
OCT 11 BIRMINGHAM Resorts World Arena
OCT 12 CARDIFF Arena

ALTER BRIDGE
SHINEDOWN, SEVENDUST

DEC 14 NOTTINGHAM Motorpoint Arena
DEC 15 MANCHESTER Arena
DEC 17 GLASGOW SSE Hydro Arena
DEC 18 BIRMINGHAM Arena
DEC 20 CARDIFF Motorpoint Arena
DEC 21 LONDON O2 Arena

AMON AMARTH

NOV 28 BIRMINGHAM O2 Academy
NOV 29 MANCHESTER O2 Apollo
NOV 30 LONDON O2 Academy Brixton

ANNIHILATOR

OCT 26 LONDON Underworld

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FEB 26 NOTTINGHAM Rock City
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BURY TOMORROW

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DEC 14 NOTTINGHAM Rock City
DEC 15 CARDIFF Y Plas
DEC 17 NEWCASTLE Riverside
DEC 18 GLASGOW SWG3
DEC 20 MANCHESTER Academy
DEC 21 LONDON Roundhouse

CLUTCH
GRAVEYARD, KAMCHATKA

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FEB 6 BIRMINGHAM O2 Institute
FEB 7 MANCHESTER O2 Ritz
FEB 8 BRISTOL Anson Rooms
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DEC 5 CARDIFF Great Hall
DEC 6 DUBLIN The Academy
DEC 7 BELFAST Limelight
DEC 9 GLASGOW SWG3 Galvanizers
DEC 10 MANCHESTER Albert Hall
DEC 12 LONDON The Roundhouse
DEC 13 NOTTINGHAM Rock City

DUFF McKAGAN

AUG 29 LONDON Islington Assembly Hall
AUG 31 DUBLIN Electric Picnic Festival
SEP 1 MANCHESTER Club Academy

GHOST
ALL THEM WITCHES
TRIBULATION

NOV 16 NOTTINGHAM Motorpoint Arena
NOV 17 CARDIFF Motorpoint Arena
NOV 18 GLASGOW SSE Hydro
NOV 20 DUBLIN 3Arena
NOV 22 LONDON SSE Arena Wembley
NOV 23 LEEDS First Direct Arena

GLORYHAMMER
BEAST IN BLACK

OCT 18 LONDON Heaven
OCT 19 MANCHESTER Club Academy
OCT 20 BRISTOL SWX

PRESS/JAKE OWENS

Venom Prison: having a field day at festivals this year

ROAD TRIPPIN'

VENOM PRISON

After slaying Glasto, the death metallers have Damnation in their sights

How have things been going since your new album dropped?
Ben Thomas (guitar): "Things have been great, we're really happy with the response that we've had; it's been so much fun touring and playing the new songs live."
Ash Gray (guitar): "It's opened up a lot of avenues for us as well, like a lot more of the offers we've got coming in for next year and stuff, so *Samsara* has done us a world of good really!"

You're playing Damnation this year, you must be feeling pretty stoked about that?
Ben: "Definitely! Last time we played, it was fucking awesome! I don't think we were expecting the reaction we had last time. The minute we walked onstage I think it was pretty impressive how people were reacting, wouldn't you say, Ash?"
Ash: "Yeah, it's one of my favourite festivals in the UK at the moment. The line-up is exactly what I would put on a line-up and I love the atmosphere. People who attend Damnation are very clued-up about music."
Ben: "Damnation attendees are connoisseurs of metal!"

It's been a festival-heavy year for you guys…
Ash: "We did Resurrection and Glastonbury, which is pretty ridiculous. It's awesome but it's mental; whoever thought a noisy band like us would get to play Glastonbury?"

What's the biggest goal for Venom Prison, festival-wise?
Ash: "That's tough – there are so many festivals I like. The main stage at Download or Bloodstock? You want them both!"

Behemoth played the main stage of Download this year. Is the glass ceiling getting smashed for extreme bands?
Ash: "Yeah, definitely. I think there is such a change at the moment with more extreme bands coming out to get into a higher position. I think a lot more bands are getting a lot more theatrical and I think that's how it's all going at the moment. Big bands are realising that just getting onstage for 50 minutes and playing isn't quite enough anymore."

What does the rest of the year have in store for you guys?
Ash: "We've got Brutal Assault in August and some shows with Parkway Drive and Thy Art Is Murder, Rock Altitude Festival in Switzerland, then back to London, so we're keeping busy!"

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The guys insisted on putting a decent barrier between them and the porridge factory

ROAD TRIPPIN'

SULPHER

The industrial metallers wrap up a busy summer with some festival performances

How's 2019 been for Sulpher so far?
Rob Holliday (guitar): "It's been a pretty cool and sometimes hectic year for us. We've been out playing a ton of shows in support of the new album, *No One Will Ever Know*, and we're looking forward to a few festivals in the UK."

What's been your favourite moment of the year so far?
"I think to finally get the album finished and out there! We also hit the Sophie stage at Bloodstock, and are going to play Infest Festival in Bradford on August 23. Oh, and a cool rock weekender the day after in Machynlleth, Wales, with Kill II This!"

You've played guitar with the likes of Marilyn Manson and The Prodigy. You must have seen some… interesting shit. What's the strangest thing you've *ever* seen on a tour?
"I think that would have to be with Marilyn Manson. I walked into an aftershow party room and there was a dwarf Manson lookalike in full Manson make-up. Then, to the left, someone had inflated a kids' blow-up swimming pool and filled it with porridge. Strippers were dancing in the porridge, and then, all of a sudden, I assume one of the girls took a dislike to the other, because they started beating the shit out of each other! Dancing girls, high heels and fist-fighting in porridge. Just a usual evening with Manson, really."

With a few world tours under your belt, what's your favourite country to visit?
"Oh my god, there are so many amazing places. A highlight would have to be in Rio De Janeiro in Brazil. The incredible Christ The Redeemer stature standing atop the mountain… when you get up to the top after the cool little train ride all the way up the mountain side, it is absolutely monumental in size and the view is breathtaking. Just stunning. Iceland is also an amazing place: the views, the Northern Lights."

What would be on your dream rider?
"Hmmm, my dream rider… maybe opening the little fridge and finding a few million stashed inside? Or maybe a brand new Harley Davidson in the corner with my name on it. Although, if I see any porridge I may run out of the room as fast as possible!"

OCT 22 BIRMINGHAM The Mill
OCT 23 NOTTINGHAM Rescue Rooms
OCT 24 DUBLIN Academy
OCT 25 GLASGOW Slay
OCT 26 DUNDEE Church

HALESTORM
IN THIS MOMENT, NEW YEARS DAY
NOV 24 GLASGOW Hydro
NOV 25 NOTTINGHAM Motorpoint Arena
NOV 27 CARDIFF Motorpoint Arena
NOV 28 LONDON Alexandra Palace

HEILUNG
NOV 10 LONDON Roundhouse

IMPERICON NEVER SAY DIE!
CRYSTAL LAKE, IN HEARTS WAKE, KING 810, POLAR & MORE
NOV 13 LONDON ULU

INFEST FESTIVAL
NITZER EBB, SHE WANTS REVENGE, ZARDONIC DIVE, SULPHER & MORE
AUG 23-25 BRADFORD University Student Union

KATAKLYSM
WHITECHAPEL, FLESHGOD APOCALYPSE, DYSCARNATE
DEC 5 LONDON Electric Ballroom

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
OCT 14 NORWICH UEA
OCT 15 BRISTOL O2 Academy
OCT 17 GLASGOW Barrowland
OCT 18 MANCHESTER Academy
OCT 19 BIRMINGHAM O2 Academy
OCT 20 LONDON Brixton Academy

LACUNA COIL
NOV 12 MANCHESTER O2 Ritz
NOV 13 GLASGOW Garage
NOV 14 DUBLIN Academy
NOV 15 BRISTOL SWX
NOV 16 LONDON O2 Kentish Town Forum
NOV 17 NOTTINGHAM Rock City

MACHINE HEAD
NOV 2 LONDON O2 Brixton Academy
NOV 4 MANCHESTER Victoria Warehouse
NOV 5 GLASGOW O2 Academy
NOV 7 BELFAST Telegraph Building
NOV 8 DUBLIN Olympia Theatre

NILE
SEP 24 MANCHESTER Club Academy
SEP 25 GLASGOW Slay
SEP 26 LONDON Dome

OPETH
OCT 27 NORWICH UEA
OCT 29 LONDON Palladium
OCT 31 GLASGOW SWG Galvanizers
NOV 1 DUBLIN Olympia Theatre
NOV 3 BRISTOL O2 Academy

OZZY OSBOURNE
JUDAS PRIEST
JAN 31 NOTTINGHAM Motorpoint Arena
FEB 2 DUBLIN 3Arena
FEB 5 MANCHESTER Arena
FEB 7 NEWCASTLE Utilita Arena
FEB 10 LONDON O2 Arena
FEB 12 GLASGOW SSE Hydro
FEB 14 BIRMINGHAM Resorts World Arena

RAMMSTEIN
JUN 17 BELFAST Boucher Playing Fields
JUN 20 COVENTRY Ricoh Arena

ROTTING CHRIST
MOONSPELL
OCT 29 LONDON Islington Assembly Hall

SABATON
APOCALYPTICA, AMARANTHE
FEB 8 LONDON SSE Arena Wembley

SACRED REICH
NOV 27 LONDON Underworld
NOV 29 NEWCASTLE University
NOV 30 GLASGOW Classic Grand
DEC 1 BELFAST Limelight
DEC 3 DUBLIN Voodoo Lounge
DEC 4 WOLVERHAMPTON Steel Mill

SAXON
OCT 18 GLASGOW Braehead Arena
OCT 19 LONDON Eventim Apollo
OCT 20 MANCHESTER O2 Apollo

SKID ROW
NOV 29 TROON Winterstorm Festival
NOV 30 WAKEFIELD Warehouse
DEC 1 NOTTINGHAM Rock City
DEC 3 SOUTHAMPTON Engine Rooms
DEC 4 CARDIFF Tramshed
DEC 6 TRECCO BAY Planet Rock Stock
DEC 7 SHEFFIELD Winter Rocks
DEC 8 BIRMINGHAM The Mill

SLEEP TOKEN
NOV 3 LONDON Underworld
NOV 4 MANCHESTER Academy 3

STATIC-X
SOIL, WEDNESDAY 13, DOPE
SEP 24 BRISTOL SWX
SEP 25 CARDIFF Tramshed
SEP 26 LONDON Electric Ballroom
SEP 27 NOTTINGHAM Rock City
SEP 28 LEEDS Stylus
SEP 29 SOUTHAMPTON Engine Rooms
OCT 01 NEWCASTLE Northumbria Institute
OCT 02 GLASGOW Garage
OCT 03 MANCHESTER The Ritz
OCT 04 BIRMINGHAM O2 Institute

VOLBEAT
BARONESS, DANKO JONES
SEP 23 NEWCASTLE O2 Academy
SEP 24 GLASGOW O2 Academy
SEP 26 LONDON O2 Academy Brixton
SEP 28 BRISTOL O2 Academy
SEP 30 BIRMINGHAM O2 Academy
OCT 1 MANCHESTER O2 Apollo
OCT 3 BELFAST Ulster HAll
OCT 4 DUBLIN Olympia Theatre

PRESS

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TWO SIDES

LIVE REVIEWS

UK TECH-METAL FEST 2019

NEWARK SHOWGROUND, NEWARK-ON-TRENT

Dying Fetus and Leprous head another showcase of pulverising precision

FRIDAY

Now in its eighth year, UK Tech-Fest has long proven a rallying point for forward-thinking metal, and this year Newark Showground's two sun-baked hangars host another three days' worth of bands guaranteed to send the mercury even higher.

London's **RED METHOD** stride onto the Fireball stage like they're here to prove a point, setting their death- and nu metal influences into a crowd-combusting whole. **ANNOTATION OF AN AUTOPSY** frontman Steve Regan paces across the Line 6 stage as the Norwich bruisers' grind-charged beatdowns set up another crowd rampage. **ICEFISH**'s melange of influences – from metal to classic rock and jazz fusion – is ear candy for prog aficionados. Unleashing rounds of machine-gun guttural vocals and complex riffery alongside progressive passages, **ARCHSPIRE** live up to their status as tech-death titans.

With the Line 6 stage audience heaving, **BLACK TONGUE** deliver a barrage of downtempo doomcore plucked directly from Hell. It's a hard act to follow, but **DYING FETUS** waste no time raising the bar for sonic extremity. From the razor-sharp grooves and metallic clatter of *Fixated On Devastation* to *Grotesque Impalement*'s muscular deathgrind, their gloriously gloomy aura hangs heavy over the Showground, proving they're certainly the wrong ones to fuck with.

SATURDAY

California's **ARMED FOR APOCALYPSE** provide a rude early awakening on the main stage. **VEXED** are a brutal, commanding revelation. Megan Targett defies a bout of tonsillitis to summon visceral, enamel-peeling vocals. **THE INTERSPHERE**'s introspective ambience couldn't be any more dissimilar, while **DEITY'S MUSE** induce a state of proggy bliss via slow burners like *Satellites* and *Ascendance*. **TIME, THE VALUATOR** make their UK festival debut in grandiose fashion as djent-spliced grooves transition into searing cleans. The elaborate math-rock mastery of **TTNG** harnesses the complex and the catchy with virtuoso guitar work, and soothing vocals during quieter moments. Switching between nerve-shredding guitars and emotive ambience, **PALM READER** deliver a set brimming with absolute belief, *Like A Wave*'s venomous urgency inciting an erupting mass of bodies.

Black Tongue take their own left-hand path to glory

THE SET
DYING FETUS
In The Trenches
Fixated On Devastation
One Shot, One Kill
From Womb To Waste
Grotesque Impalement
Panic Amongst The Herd
Destroy The Opposition
Eviscerated Offspring
Seething With Disdain
Your Treachery Will Die With You
Wrong One To Fuck With

PSYCROPTIC are a tech-death force to be reckoned with. Barking "Come on British cunts, you know what to do!" Jason Peppiatt releases a tsunami of feral energy that threatens to swallow the rabid crowd whole. Replacing **MONUMENTS** talisman Chris Barretto, Makri's Andy Cizek rises to the challenge and then some. The room is packed as the collective tear through a blistering salvo of *A.W.O.L* and *I, The Creator*. Cizek showcases his vocal chops as he metamorphoses into a raging beast, segueing from effortless cleans to guttural roars in the blink of a djent-fuelled riff, and the reappearance of drummer Michael Malyan during classic hit *Regenerate* threatens to raise the hangar roof.

SUNDAY

Declaring this tight-knit community to be the best in the music-loving world, Darryl Jones leads **SWORN AMONGST** through a set chock-full of colossal riffery and gut-wrenching belligerence. An impassioned *The Cleansing* is dedicated to anyone struggling with their demons. Eyes are wiped and horns raised as **CARCER CITY** bid a ferocious farewell amid a blaze of infectious metalcore, fret-wrangling and bursts of atmospheric electronica. Call-to-arms anthem *Sovereign* splits the room in half before the quartet take their final bow. **HARBINGER** must surely be main-stage candidates next time out, as their blistering, riff-drenched maelstrom is absolutely staggering. **FROM SORROW TO SERENITY**'s relentless barrage continues to impress; their seismic grooves set them apart and set heads banging. It's another enthralling display from **VALIS ABLAZE**, whose low-end, djenty grooves rumble alongside shimmering melodies and soaring vocal lines. Yes, that's a banana raging on stage during **VILDJHARTA**, and eyes continue to widen as the Swedish djentlemen unleash the type of jarring staccato riffs and rumbling chord progressions capable of making Meshuggah sweat.

It's impossible not to be moved by headliners **LEPROUS**. The Norwegians stir souls as the evocative strains of opener *Bonneville* takes the room on an immersive journey, transitioning from delicate, twinkling harmonies to an explosion of emotive power that leaves jaws on the floor. Both *The Flood* and *From The Flame* highlight the vocal prowess of Einar Solberg – the pulsating thump of the former offset by blinding strobes – while the swelling, atypical guitar rhythms of *Mirage* ensures thast another thrilling Tech-Fest concludes in triumphant fashion.

SOPHIE MAUGHAN

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Dying Fetus: Sean Beasley unleashes his mace of bass

JAMES SHARROCK

Red Method: songs in the key of outright anarchy

WorldMags.net

COMEBACK KID
BOSTON MUSIC ROOM, LONDON

After 19 years in the game, **COMEBACK KID** can still put on the kind of show that gets sweat dripping from the ceiling. True, some of their peers are filling larger spaces than this, but the Canadians' no-nonsense melodic hardcore is suited to venues without barriers, where fans can grab the mic, and band and crowd can stare each other in the whites of the eyes.

Before the band tear onstage, the atmosphere in the room feels coiled and tense. Then when frontman Andrew Neufeld lets out the first chainsaw-throated roar of opener *Do Yourself A Favor*, it explodes in a white-hot flare of feelgood energy and gritted-teeth intensity. Pints and fists are thrust skyward, and from then on the pit heaves and seethes with an interminable wave of flailing bodies. In *Surrender Control*, *G.M. Vincent & I* and *Wake The Dead*, CBK have some of the most anthemic, we're-all-in-it-together gang chants going. By the latter, the stagediving has become ridiculously elaborate, with punters somersaulting and walking backwards over the crowd.

CBK might not be pushing hardcore in the same new and challenging directions as some of their peers, but they remain a cathartic joy to behold.

DANNII LEIVERS

DEITY'S MUSE
TEMPLES ON MARS
229, THE VENUE, LONDON

A bunch of people are clearly here tonight to see London proggers **TEMPLES ON MARS**, so it's a shame when they start playing and the sound is shocking. It transpires that someone brought them a snare drum just minutes earlier – get that man a drink – and things soon even out while they're giving it their all. New song *Black Mirror* hits the target and their 25-minute slot feels too short. If ever there's an advert for supporting your local scene, this is it.

South Africa's **DEITY'S MUSE** are miles from home, and some of the crowd drift away, but those who stay are treated to an intricate set from a band who have also put in the hard hours. Frontman Wayne Boucher jokes about getting an eye infection, fracturing his toe and being in a breakdown on this run of dates, which has seen them support Monuments and play UK Tech-Fest. *Ten Years*, their heaviest song, gets the best response, but sophisticated new progressive material such as *Sleep Escape* subtly inveigles its way into your brain. It's not easy for a band from South Africa to break through in the UK, and its testament to them that this Monday night gig on what was a hot London day leaves people yelling for an encore.

ELEANOR GOODMAN

BABYMETAL
AMARANTHE/SLEEP TOKEN
02 BRIXTON ACADEMY, LONDON

Japanese sensations replenish their ranks

A NIGHT OF theatrical metal lies ahead, and if tonight's openers **SLEEP TOKEN** don't give you chills then you have no soul. With a set comprised of mostly new songs and the debut of intimidating new single *The Night Does Not Belong To God*, the mysterious London outfit perform their ritual in the shadows of moody, dim lighting and a tense atmosphere you could cut with a knife. The sinister notes of *Bloodsport*, the only established song they play tonight, could power their set on its own menacing energy, while frontman Vessel breathes ominously into the mic.

The triple-threat vocals of high-octane Swedish power metallers **AMARANTHE** translate beautifully live, twisting and turning through serene melodies and intense riffs with precision. In celebration of last year's album *Helix*, the lightning-fast nu metal-esque *GG6* makes a great addition to the setlist. *Hunger* hits all the right rousing notes for the Academy crowd, while a little assistance from them and a heavenly opening verse from Elize Ryd ignites the singalong *Amaranthine*. Axeman Olof Mörck delivers powerful solos throughout, until the crowd drowns him out for a stunning rendition of fan favourite *Drop Dead Cynical*.

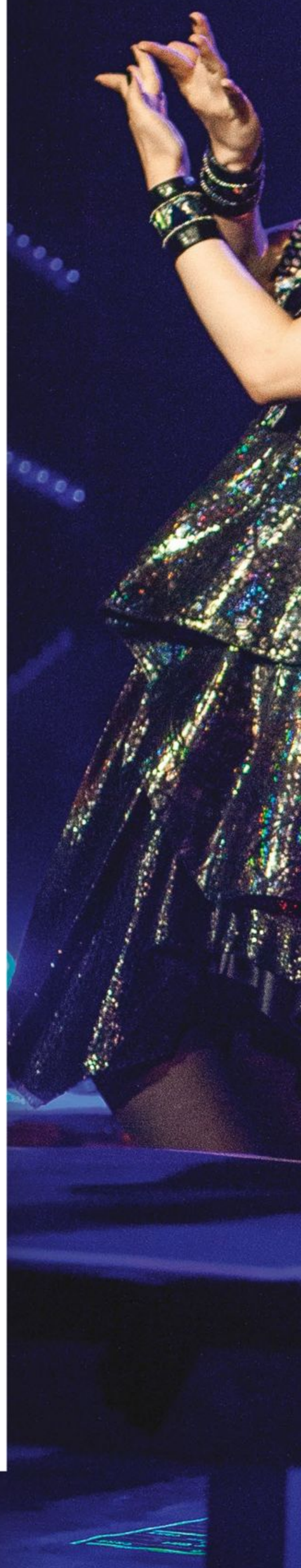
Japanese idol metal sensations **BABYMETAL** introduce their new third member, Riho Sayashi, to their headline shows after a storming set at this summer's Glastonbury Festival. Fans would be hard-pressed to find fault in their appearance as Riho takes her place, however permanently, in their ranks.

Somewhat unusually for the metal scene, Babymetal shows are accompanied by louder cheers whenever a new song premieres, and tonight is no exception. Introducing material from upcoming album *Metal Galaxy*, new additions *Starlight* and *Syncopation* alongside the working title of *Ind-metal* hit all the right notes with the dedicated here tonight. Rarely do you see a crowd that knows every single lyric irrespective of language, but Babymetal's does, as demonstrated by the participation in the blistering *Pa Pa Ya!!*.

After nearly a decade with the group, vocalist Su-metal shows no sign of slowing her energetic onstage displays, particularly through her glittering solo verses opening *The One*. With the help of a spirited show from the Kami band's masked bassist, *Gimme Chocolate!!* threatens the safety of the Academy's roof, while fan favourite *Karate* barges in with relentless pyro, and every choreographed step done with precision and in perfect time.

If this evening's events are anything to go by, then Babymetal's post-*Metal Galaxy* show at London's Apollo will be equally unforgettable.

ALI COOPER



Babymetal turn up the heat

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Three, that's the magic number

STEVE BROWN

WorldMags.net

Al Jourgensen chimes with the endtimes

MINISTRY
3TEETH/GRAVE LINES
O2 SHEPHERD'S BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON

Chicago's industrial kingpins retake their crown

GRAVE LINES initially seem like an odd fit on tonight's bill, anyone who's followed Al Jourgensen's personal journeys to the frayed edges of sanity can find some sense of kinship in the London four-piece. Sludge-based, but with a narrative scope, their tales of being, down, out of your head and ultimate deliverance are embodied in frontman Jake Harding's dishevelled stagecraft, switching between rich and ragged vocals before a final surge of riffs charges an already-enraptured crowd. It's up to **3TEETH**'s Alexis Mincolla – a man who looks like a future-shock fusion of Dick Dastardly, Bill 'The Butcher' Cutting and Biggles – to mention the elephant in the room: that Rammstein are playing the same night up the M1. Not that there's any lack of commitment from an audience clearly wired to their orgiastic, dystopian core. As a live experience, they're as thrilling as any band with barely a single memorable song can get. Stealing liberally from the likes of NIN and Manson, forging them into irrepressible, sci-fi strip-club stomps, their force of personality overrides any sense that they're making a bold artistic statement, even if Mincolla's dry between-song wit doesn't quite connect with an otherwise fully primed Shepherd's Bush Empire.

Recent **MINISTRY** gigs have proven more wayward circus than potent diatribe, but if the idea of a run-though of their last, dissolute fever dream of an album, *AmeriKKKant*, is a timely if not entirely enticing prospect, it becomes the backbone for their most exhilarating, headfuck of a gig since the *Psalm 69* days. It helps that that band are tighter than they've ever been, but the backscreen's zoom-in to Donald Trump's digitised eye is the portal to a psychedelic cyber-journey, where pneumatic riffs and grooves are hammered repeatedly to mind-spinning, id-unleashing effect. Al is on sharp form too, to the point where later classics, *Jesus Built My Hotrod*, *Just One Fix* and *N.W.O.* are roof-ripping icing on the cake. Rammwho?

JONATHAN SELZER

GAMA BOMB
DIVINE CHAOS/SHRAPNEL
UNDERWORLD, LONDON

A decade in, and Norfolk thrashers **SHRAPNEL** still exude the sort of youthful exuberance and in-your-face energy that keeps sounding enjoyable. Their Teutonic-meets-Testament thrashings makes them an entertaining, life-affirming blast through songs about war and destruction. There's more to Slough than just *The Office*, although **DIVINE CHAOS** could at times be Swedish instead. They're slick, powerful and clearly have an eye on the big riff, their far more modern take on thrash veering at times into melodeath that's more Wacken than Bay Area. Seventeen years in, it's fair to say that **GAMA BOMB** have lasted far, far longer than most of the original thrash bands that inspired them in the first place. Not too much has changed; they still love Agent Steel and Exodus, frontman Phillie Byrne still dresses like a baddie from *Commando*, and this Irish quintet are still a fun ride. Phillie makes an engaging and entertaining frontman, as he steers them through a lifetime of old computer games and Jean Claude van Damme straight-to-video releases. The 00s thrash kids may have grown up, but they still make a fine old racket.

ALASTAIR RIDDELL

WEEDEATER
ASG/TRIPPY WICKED & THE COSMIC CHILDREN OF THE KNIGHT
THE DOME, LONDON

St Albans trio **TRIPPY WICKED & THE COSMIC CHILDREN OF THE KNIGHT** have been plying their trade for more than a decade and remain a solid stoner proposition with big and blunted riffs aplenty. Likewise, **ASG** give off a laidback slacker vibe as familiar as it is engaging. Visually, most of the attention is drawn towards drummer Scott Key, due both to his rampant thrashing at the kit and his tremendous helmet-like arrangement of hairstyle and facial hair. Sonically, they are still essentially Kyuss with Geddy Lee on vocals; what's not to love? The key difference between **WEEDEATER** and this evening's support is that while Trippy Wicked and ASG make music that is to varying extents *about* altered states, the trio absolutely embody them. Theirs is a thick, viscous sound, oozing *The Blob*-like from the amps until the audience is neck-deep in glowing green liquescence. Weedeater have never been droners in the Sunn O))) vein, preferring to contain their riffs within basic song structures. But live, with each song flowing into the next and building up to a cumulative catharsis, the effect is just as impressively alien.

JOSEPH STANNARD

MINISTRY: MARIE KORNER

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CONVERGE

TERROR/SECT/FANGE

O2 RITZ, MANCHESTER

Boston's highly evolved heroes wring more emotion from their maelstrom

CONVERGE'S SUMMER TOUR hits Manchester at its midpoint. A humbly groundbreaking band that evolved beyond their hardcore roots to lay major foundations in the 90s and early 00s for metal, math and deathcore, their support reflects their roots. French sludgers **FANGE** replace late dropouts Candy, relying on fabled distortion WMD, the HM2 pedal, to wreak destruction but lack the songs to back up their ear-shattering dirge. **SECT**, later revered by Converge frontman Jacob Bannon as hardcore "gamechangers", rage wholeheartedly but fundamentally lack impact, their audience lacklustre.

LA hardcore legends **TERROR** have no such problem. The bullish veterans charge though an energetic set of mixed messages, frontman Scott Vogel insistent that everyone has fun whilst simultaneously encouraging violence. Their 17-year stampede has yet to show signs of slowing down as they flex through 'roid-rage renditions of *Lowest Of The Low*, *This World Never Wanted Me* and *Keepers Of The Faith*.

CONVERGE, progenitors and innovators for almost 30 years, prove still ahead of the game. Their iconic *Jane Doe* death mask, rendered bone-white behind them, is arguably the biggest visual icon to emerge from punk roots since the Misfits' skull, and their music – spasmodic tech seething with defiance – dips its toes into everything from hardcore to grind, yet remains their own, having outlasted many they influenced. After a moody introduction of *A Single Tear* they tear into *Dark Horse*. Bannon, heavily tattooed, mantis-like, smiles in earnest, his unintelligible bellow nevertheless speaking directly to the heart. During *Black Cloud* his skeleton looks sure to tear from beneath tightly drawn skin, so energetically does he leap across the stage. Drummer Ben Koller's fervour through *Cutter* and *Runaway* make four drums sound like 10: a permanent ricochet of hits. His chops are matched only by guitarist/producer Kurt Ballou's casual complexity as he coolly hammers his way through the dying embers of rager *Drop Out*. Before a vehement encore rendition of *Concubine*, Bannon beats his chest and spits the line *'Pound for pound, I am the most vicious of all'* from Entombed's *Wolverine Blues* – covered by Converge in 2012. On tonight's evidence, he's dead right.

TOM O'BOYLE

Jacob Bannon hits an emotional motherlode

CONVERGE: SABRINA RAMROYAL

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Carach Angren's Seregor: blood king

CARACH ANGREN

WOLFHEART/THY ANTICHRIST/NEVALRA

THE FLEECE

Dutch black metallers bring a feast of horror to Bristol

WITH A HEFTY dose of NWOBHM included in their black metal, Missouri trio **NEVALRA** make a promising debut in Bristol. Frontman Scott Eames has an excellent set of pipes on him and touring drummer Adrian Galindo puts in a ferocious shift that elevates the impact of the set considerably. Eames pulls double duty as guitarist in **THY ANTICHRIST**, whose Colombian roots are demonstrated in their spot-on tribal aesthetics, particularly on vocalist Andres Vargas, a.k.a Antichrist 666. They have some sizeable black metal songs as well, *The Great Beast* and *Destroying The Myth* the picks of their performed material. The arrival of **WOLFHEART** sees a lot of flailing hair from all corners of the room, particularly during the unholy trinity of *Breakwater, Abyss* and a pulverising *Zero Gravity*. They are tight, abrasive and boast a lightshow so harsh and strobe-heavy that the all-round experience would unnerve even the hardiest of souls. **CARACH ANGREN** are intent on making their show as brutal as the fortified pass into Mordor from which they take their name. They succeed admirably. Still touring in support of 2017's *Dance And Laugh Among The Rotten*, the Dutch black metallers turn The Fleece into their own horror show for an hour, complete with frontman Seregor slitting the throat of a mannequin, drinking the blood and then spitting it into the mouth of a member of the front row during a rousing *Blood Queen*. They benefit from a crisp sound that allows the stomp and chug of *Pitch Black Box* to reverberate clearly and *A Strange Presence Near the Woods* is a full-on assault to the senses. The biggest shame about tonight is that the venue is less than half-full, because Carach Angren deserve far more than this, especially after providing Bristol with the perfect Sunday evening service.

ELLIOT LEAVER

BLOODYWOOD

THE LANES, BRISTOL

They started as an online-based covers band, evolved by combining traditional Indian folk music with metal, and now **BLOODYWOOD** are undertaking their first ever UK tour, the brilliantly titled Raj Against The Machine run. To the more conservative members of the metal community, they'd likely be discarded as a novelty with little-to-no shelf life, but try telling that to the rammed-solid crowd who are behind the New Delhi outfit from beginning to end. The band respond in earnest, throwing out every song available to them, from the joyous romp of *Rang De Basanti* to the empowering *Jee Veerey* that stands as a call-to-arms against depression and mental illness. Sure, there are too many moments where the sound appears to have been dragged through the mud at Download this year and the band's cover of *Smells Like Teen Spirit* is questionable at best, but everybody is having far too much fun to care, and smash hit *Ari Ari* threatens to bring the roof down with a sizeable moshpit to boot. A flash-in-the-pan group who won't be around in the next five years? Not if this is anything to go by.

ELLIOT LEAVER

KOWLOON WALLED CITY

TOWN PORTAL/WREN

THE OLD ENGLAND, BRISTOL

More accustomed to jazz and open mic nights, the cramped backroom of The Old England doesn't initially seem the best setting for its increasingly heavier calendar. And yet while it can only accommodate a few dozen onlookers, its cosy atmosphere and ability to nurture an obscenely dense sound offers a unique character next to Bristol's other small venues. The claustrophobic confines certainly add to **WREN**'s debilitating sludge assault, with the searing volume and rumbling bass manifesting into something profound. By comparison, Denmark's instrumental trio **TOWN PORTAL** are a breath of fresh air. There are murky corridors to navigate but mostly their exploitative, fiddly meandering is ever looking to escape into more unrestricted territory. While similarly shamanic Oakland brethren Neurosis are pummelling away down the M4 in London, **KOWLOON WALLED CITY** deliver a more refined approach that suit the austere surroundings. Though the vocals feel rather paltry, paling in the vast depths and angular chords of *White Walls*, the noisy, succinct *50s Dad* and melodic rays that shine on *Container Ships* constantly keep you guessing. The short headline set is over just as the quartet are sinking their claws into their gritty voyage but it's still a rush while it lasts.

ADAM REES

DUNCAN EVERSON

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Neurosis's Scott Kelly: imperious elegance

NEUROSIS

GODFLESH/YOB

02 THE FORUM, LONDON

Oakland's elemental standard bearers take a deep, devastating dive

Justin Broadrick: Godflesh's industrial godfather

IF YOU'RE A believer in the exponential, catharsis-inducing power of the riff, tonight is a dream line-up. All three bands are masters at transforming bleak, crushing sonics into a spiritual quest, and the Forum is already rammed by the time **YOB** make their early 6.30pm start. A band who could fill a decent-sized venue full of devotees in their own right, the Oregonians' elevating heft has taken on added resonance in the wake of frontman Mike Scheidt's recent orbit around death's door at the hands of acute diverticulitis. Tonight they make their half-hour set sound like a lifetime-and-beyond's journey, ranging from *Quantum Mystic*'s characteristic, mantic pulse as grounding through the slingshot-through-the nebula momentum of *The Lie That Is Sin* to *Our Raw Heart*'s incendiary, chakra-shaking lead-break deliverance that hits the crowd like a rapt blastwave.

One of the most seminal and groundbreaking bands in the extreme music canon, **GODFLESH** tonight are a very different beast from the breakbeat-heavy colossus that hit the Forum last time they supported Neurosis in 2012. Still channelling their Birmingham hometown's legacy, that aura of asphyxiating, dark Satanic mills, this is nevertheless a deep-cut, 'hit'-free set that bypasses their landmark *Streetcleaner* album. Justin Broadrick and Benny Green's industrial, piston-powered clangour and guitar tone more caustic than Xenomorph blood is protest music, as in the sound of humanity under near-unendurable stress. Tonight they offer little relief, but their perseverance gives rise to an immense power, coursing along that faultline where the deeply human and inhuman come to never-ending blows.

Having honoured ('celebrate' would be inappropriate) their third decade three years ago, **NEUROSIS** also go for a path less travelled tonight, going no further back than 2009's *Sovereign*, which means nothing from *Through Silver In Blood*, and less of the seismic release than we're used to. But Neurosis tours have a habit of highlighting different shades of their emotional spectrum, and from *A Sun That Never Sets* onwards, this is a mournful yet still utterly enthralling experience where guitar strings might as well be made out of tendons, Scott Kelly and Steve von Till's vocals are heaved from harrowed earth and the likes of *A Shadow Memory, Given To The Rising* and *End Of The Harvest* become towering laments that cast long shadows across the soul while replenishing it with new levels of elemental awe.

JONATHAN SELZER

DEREK BREMNER

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Full Of Hell's Dylan Walker expels his demons

THE BODY/FULL OF HELL

PETBRICK/THRESHOLD ENTITIES

THE DOME, LONDON

Hellish noisemongers join forces to exhilarating effect

IT SEEMS LUDICROUS that this double-handed headfuck can sell out the hangar-like Dome, but welcome to the wonderful world of heavy metal in 2019: utterly fearless, and ever-hungry for fresh new horrors. After some early experimentation from **THRESHOLD ENTITIES** and **PETBRICK** it's into the true meat of the night's ordeal as **THE BODY** quietly take the stage. Though singer/guitarist Chip King stands a foot back from his mic at all times, his ungodly shriek still cuts the humid air like a scythe, while drummer Lee Buford's piston-like performance provides the focal point for the band's whole set. Beyond the brief addition of Full Of Hell's Samuel Di Gristine on sax, the band's performance is thoroughly inward-focused, but just as it threatens to descend into mush something strange happens – meaninglessness becomes meaning, and the band's hypnotic hate-sludge takes on a mesmeric quality like the hot thrum of blood in your veins. **FULL OF HELL**, by contrast, are crisp and dynamic as they surge through the likes of *Silmaril* and *Thundering Hammers*. Frontman Dylan Walker is a chiropractor's wet dream, cracking and contorting as he haemorrhages vitriol and goads the somewhat polite crowd into activity: "This is a new one," he says drily at one point. "It's about jumping off a stage." Gradually the audience takes the bait and grows bolder, with a series of bodies tumbling like an avalanche loosed by the band's noise-assisted grind eruptions. Things close out with the two bands coagulating to form a six-headed hell-presence, sloughing off large chunks of their own individuality to forge a whole new language. At its peak the industrialised assault seems to send a pained undulation through the crowd like an inverted, stomach-cramping Mexican wave, all while those standing shoulder to shoulder onstage appear, bizarrely, to be having the time of their lives.

ALEX DELLER

The Body screech to the perverted

KARYBDIS
ZOOKEEPER
THE GRYPHON, BRISTOL

ZOOKEEPER by name; animals by nature. Despite everyone sweating twice their own body weight in this insane heat tonight, the contagiously fun energy this alt-rock four-piece give off more than makes up for it. Dishing out solid riff after riff with little to no fucks given; think Puppy at their quirkiest with a sprinkle of Milk Teeth for good measure. A combo just too good to be kept secret. Gutted to hear that headliners Outright Resistance had to cancel due to vocalist James Jest falling ill, things don't look any more promising for melodeath quintet **KARYBDIS**, who step up to fill the top spot. For what is essentially a dress rehearsal, things look pretty dire for the London outfit as the audience is tiny. Not giving up without a fight, what they lack in attendance is more than made up for with their charisma and top-quality brutality, filling the room with sheer force. Fortunately, blasting cutting-edge death metal doesn't get ignored for too long. Gradually rewarded as a small crowd begins to gather and have it out in the world's smallest and clammiest pit, it might not be a sold-out Underworld, but when things are this intimate and fun, who really cares?

HYWEL DAVIES

UNIFORM
BAD BREEDING
ELECTROWERKZ, LONDON

It's the hottest day on record today, and outside most Londoners are holding cold beers or melting ice creams, but in the gloomy, dank confines of Electrowerkz a group of sadists have gathered to take an aural punishing in the oppressive heat. **BAD BREEDING**'s ramshackle nature may suggest they aren't quite the finished article yet, but punk of this nature should never become too overly polished, and their mixture of early Dischord Records DC hardcore aggression, the almost dub-like rhythms of PiL and the kind of industrialised guitar washes that Killing Joke have perfected shows a wider palette than many of their peers. There is nuance too in **UNIFORM**, especially on record, but their live show is more about pure noise and catharsis than musical layers. The New Yorkers too have more than a touch of 80s post-punk about them, but it's strangled by the sheer wall of brutal, screaming guitars and the manic and unhinged stage presence of frontman Micheal Berdan, who stalks the stage with an unblinking stare, bellowing his lungs raw. They end with a murderous cover of The Misfits' *Hybrid Moments* that is so scathing that braving the heat outside seems like blessed relief.

STEPHEN HILL

THE BODY/FULL OF HELL: JAMES SHARROCK

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Zhrine's Þorbjörn takes a bow

Týr give their fans a whale of a time

ZHRINE: GWENAEL AKIRA HELMSDAL CARRÉ / TYR: ALESSIO MESIANO

G! FESTIVAL

SYÐRUGØTA, FAROE ISLANDS

The Nordic new wave sets pulses racing at the edge of the world

IF THERE'S A festival setting that's any more spectacular, it probably isn't on this planet. Taking place on a small stretch of beach in a tiny, 400-population town set into the west of the Faroe Islands, G! Festival overlooks a vast bay bordered on either side by towering, green-clad mountain ranges, whose tops are more often than not obscured by atmosphere-enhancing mist. This isn't a metal fest per se, but Arch Enemy, At The Gates and Meshuggah have played here in the past, and this year it's hosting its first metal showcase – set in a nearby, rather rustic-smelling barn – highlighting the ever-expanding blastwave of the Nordic scene's next generation.

If your brain is already addled by the surrounding landscape, Faroese nutters **IRON LUNGS** aren't going to put you on any kind of even keel. Beats fall in the wrong place, thudding bass rabbit punches your temples, inebriated, jazzy interludes wander in, and yet their noisecore-on-downers melee soon exerts a powerful grip, aided by a vocalist who looks like he's tightrope walking through his own private hellscape. Iceland's **ZHRINE** are a somewhat more elegant proposition, their multi-textured, atmospheric take on black metal enhanced by electric cello instead of bass, and a bow used on frontman Þorbjörn's lead guitar. From tense, juddering ratcheting up of tension through incandescent charges that take Wolves In The Throne Room-style velocity into wholly new environments to moments of delicate, mournful beauty, tonight's set feels like a finely tuned emotional barometer and a personal rite of deliverance that enthrals a packed venue and resonates thoroughly with the spectacular landscape beyond.

Note to future festival bookers: if you want a band guaranteed to put a bomb under a crowd, get hold of **BÆST**. Starting a host of moshpits, circlepits and walls of death amongst battlejacket-bearers and the unsuspecting metal-curious alike, the Danes' engaging gang mentality, no-fucks-given attitude and riotously roughshod approach to death metal is a pure adrenaline hit, goaded on by charismatic frontman Simon Olsen. New songs add explosive d-beats to the fray, and for all the body-jolting grimness of their *Danse Macabre* album, live they're groove-heavy, lead break-lacing party starters that sends everyone out on a bruised and giddy high.

Despite their past-1am start, **TÝR**'s main stage show isn't short of revellers, and for all the whale-hunting controversy they've drawn internationally, they have a special resonance in their home country, their Viking-meets-power metal anthems not short on cheese but rich in historical lore that has a full crowd raising horns in the most fitting of settings.

JONATHAN SELZER

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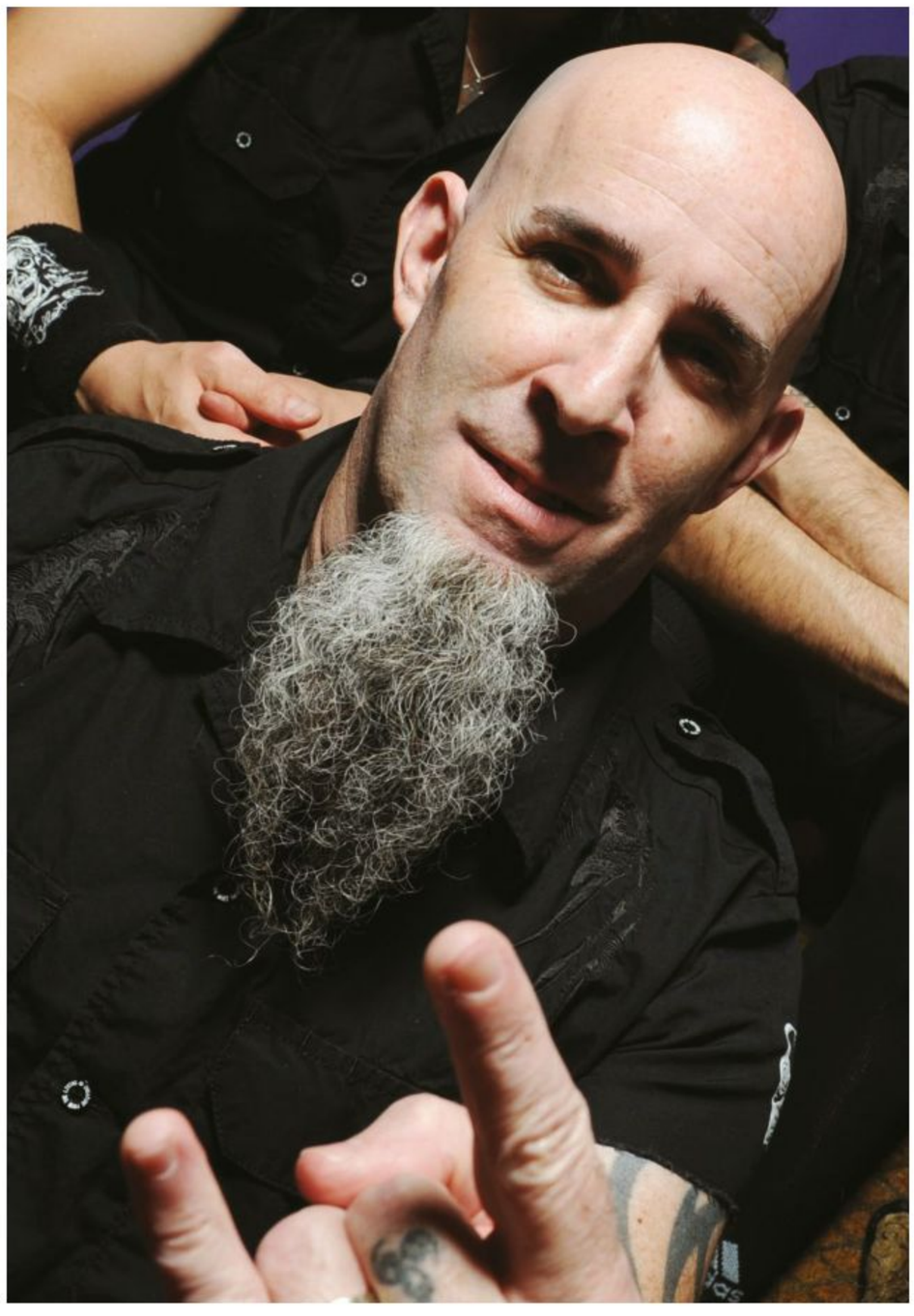
FIVE MINUTES WITH SCOTT IAN ANTHRAX

He's not a fan of magic mushrooms, but he is most definitely a fan of comic movies. Maybe a bit too much…

WORDS: ALI COOPER



What's the worst thing about being in a band?
"Alice Cooper once said, 'They don't pay me to play, they pay me to travel.' To me, there is no worst thing because it's all I've ever wanted to do. The travelling can be a pain in the ass but I can't complain; the time I have away from my family affords me more time with them in the long run because I'm not working a 9-5 job."

What's the best advice you've ever been given?
"When the band first started, I quit college and worked in my dad's office so I could afford equipment and demos. My mom wasn't thrilled with my life choice but my dad said to me, 'If this is where your passion and your heart is, you have to try it and you can always go back to school later.'"

When was the first time you felt like a rockstar?
"I think of guys like Steven Tyler and Gene Simmons as rockstars. I've never lived a lifestyle like those guys. However, being in Anthrax sometimes helps me get a table in a restaurant when there wasn't a reservation, so that makes me feel like a rockstar!"

What's been your worst experience on drugs?
"I dabbled with mushrooms once in New York City and it went really bad. For the first hour, I'd figured out every secret of the universe and I had to write it all down. Then I somehow called a limo to take me and my two friends to a rock bar and I realised my friends had died, came back as zombies and were trying to eat me, so I tried to jump out of the moving car. That devolved into me thinking they were all part of some cabal trying to kill me, so I made the driver pull over so I could get away. I ended up in a hospital at 5.30am coming down from this crazy trip realising what an asshole I am. I've not touched any drugs since!"

"I THOUGHT MY FRIENDS WERE ZOMBIES AND WERE TRYING TO EAT ME"

When was the last time you cried?
"Yesterday, while I was watching *Avengers: Endgame*. *Endgame* is the culmination of 10 years of Marvel movies and 49 years of my life as a comic book fan. I made a note of every time I got choked up in the movie so I could tell my wife afterwards – there were seven."

What's your favourite stage memory with Anthrax?
"The first festival we ever did, Monsters Of Rock, at Castle Donington in 1987, in front of 80,000 people. I've never seen or felt anything like the response we got from that crowd, it was 10 times bigger than any show we had ever played. We played Download festival again this year at that same site and it feels extra-special whenever we're back."

How are things going with The Damned Things?
"The shows in the States so far have been killer. People have waited so long for us to come back, including us, because up until a year ago we didn't know we'd be doing this again. We're making sure we fit the UK into our schedule soon."

How's the new Anthrax album coming along?
"We started working in January, on and off. We've had a couple of writing sessions and it's going great so far. It's amazing that we're still touring off the back of the last album, *For All Kings*, three years later."

What does it mean to you to be such a big part of the Slayer farewell tour?
"We are honoured that they wanted to include us and that it's important to them that we share in this celebration of the band. We have all been friends for a really long time and we've done well over 100 shows with them now."

What's the craziest thing you've seen in an Anthrax crowd?
"Whenever we play in Santiago, Chile, the fans always sneak these big road flares into the venues and they start giant circle pits with huge flares. It's fucking nuts. The fans tell us they're very careful about it but come on, some people are definitely getting their hair burned. Apparently it's normal for a metal show there and that's why they're the craziest audience in the world."

THE DAMNED THINGS' LATEST ALBUM, *HIGH CRIMES*, IS OUT NOW VIA NUCLEAR BLAST

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